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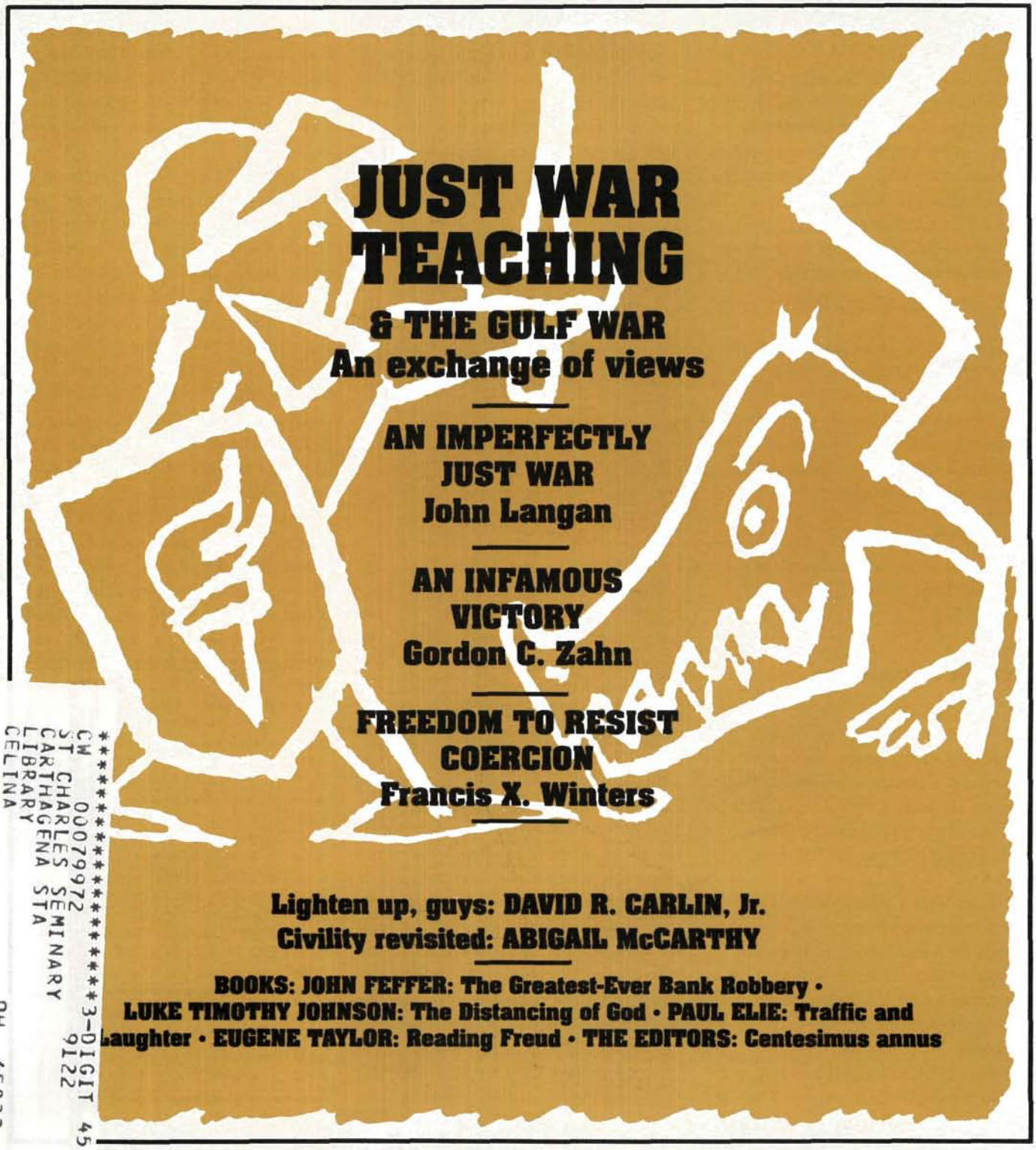

JUST WAR TEACHING
& THE GULF WAR
An exchange of views

AN IMPERFECTLY JUST WAR
John Langan

AN INFAMOUS VICTORY
Gordon C. Zahn

FREEDOM TO RESIST COERCION
Francis X. Winters

Lighten up, guys: DAVID R. CARLIN, Jr.
Civility revisited: ABIGAIL McCARTHY

BOOKS: JOHN FEFFER: The Greatest-Ever Bank Robbery • LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON: The Distancing of God • PAUL ELIE: Traffic and Laughter • EUGENE TAYLOR: Reading Freud • THE EDITORS: Centesimus annus

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CORRESPONDENCE

Unmask the villain!

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: In his article "Give Me Shelter" [April 19], John J. Piderit details the behavior of a Bronx landlord, "Mr. C.," who obtained ownership of a building, promised to make needed repairs, and betrayed the tenants' trust; not only did he fail to keep his promises, but he often harassed his tenants by withholding hot water—and sometimes cold water, including toilet water. When tenants complained, he maliciously tore out a TV antenna. He filed an unwarranted complaint against an activist tenant out of "pure harassment," writes Piderit, who does not hide his contempt for this wicked exploiter of the poor and helpless.

Why, then, I wonder, does Piderit allow the landlord to escape public disgrace by hiding his true identity? Though "the system," as Piderit eloquently demonstrates, is unresponsive, the weapon of public exposure is one of the few that is still effective and can lead to change. Name him!

MARIE WINN

From the author: The address of the building is 2645 Morris Avenue, and the name of the landlord is Nicholas Chimienti.

JOHN J. PIDERIT

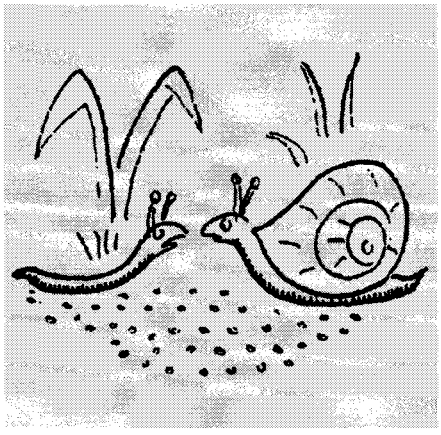
Creed & culture

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: In response to the letter from Ceil Reh [Correspondence, April 19], criticizing a remark attributed to Father Eugene Hillman, I wish to comment on the basis of many years experience working with Father Hillman in Tanzania, East Africa.

I do not think Father Hillman is proposing a new kind of marriage, nor is he proposing a theological justification for polygamy. Rather, he is trying to come to terms with a marital situation which exists among certain nomadic tribes with whom he works.

Father Hillman has worked among the Masai people for many years. They are a nomadic-pastoral people who are polygamous in customs and culture. Evangelization has been going on among these people for nearly forty years. They have been receptive to the word of God. Most often they have been instructed as a community, because their concepts and whole manner of living are communal; extended families include husband and wives, their sons and wives, their grandsons and wives together with all the children born over these generations.



"The mortgage repayments caught up with me."

The question rises: Can they be baptized? How do we baptize them? To them it is anathema to baptize individuals, even if a given individual wants baptism. It is as an extended family that they have been instructed and desire baptism. Do we demand that they first become monogamous? Suppose, for example, that a man with five wives leaves four and chooses one. What about the four wives who now have no husband and no support, who cannot return to their parents, who cannot marry anyone else, and who cannot now bear any more children—for them, the only source of meaning in an adult woman's life. They cannot claim the children they have borne, for children are the property of the husband who paid dowry at the time of marriage. Some have tried to go it alone, but they usually become prostitutes.

Or do we allow them to remain with their legal husband according to tribal custom, and live with dignity and integrity together with their children, in the way their mothers and fathers and ancestors lived? It is the only kind of life they understand. Missionaries have been rightly accused of imposing their Western style upon indigenous people, tearing away their customs and leaving them naked to be clothed with the pure linen of Western civilization in the name of the gospel. Witness the thousands of disinherited and dislocated girls roaming around Nairobi.

It seems Ms. Reh would tell people like the Masai and others that they cannot receive baptism until they accept and practice the full teaching of Jesus Christ on marriage. Such a drastic change of life will be possible only in future generations, when their tribal culture ceases to exist. If the full teaching of the gospel must be accepted before baptism, how is it that white people in South Africa who are blatantly racist in theology, philosophy, and practice, who violate the first and most fundamental law of Christ, love of God and neighbor, are eligible?

Finally, I did not appreciate the example cited by Ms. Reh, speaking from a feminist perspective, of the Old Testament woman who was raped and dismembered, and parts of her body distributed to the tribes of

(Continued on page 381)

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COMMONWEAL

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After communism

Encyclical readers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains—or is it your presuppositions? Or so the partisan reaction to John Paul's new encyclical *Centesimus annus* (*The Hundredth Year*) might prompt the wistful to remark. Some, most notably Peter Hebblethwaite in the *National Catholic Reporter* (May 10, 1991), greeted the pope's wide-ranging discourse on human dignity and economic theory, the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, and the plight of the third world petulantly. Over on the reconstructed left, the *Nation* read *Centesimus* with smirking disbelief, and then warned hysterically of Rome's theocratic ambitions. On the Gradgrind side of the political spectrum, Richard John Neuhaus, the *National Review*, and others embraced the encyclical's endorsement of market economies as a veritable lightning bolt from heaven. Neuhaus even declared, in the *Wall Street Journal* (May 2), that the encyclical sanctioned capitalism as "the economic corollary of the Christian understanding of man's nature and destiny." (Imagine how the doors of purgatory have been flung open upon hearing this news!) With a less charitable flourish, Neuhaus suggested that *Centesimus* was a rebuke of the economic ideas of America's bishops. "It may be...that the controlling assumptions of the American bishops' pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, must now be recognized as unrepresentative of the church's authoritative teaching," he wrote.

Catholicism's opposition to Marxism and state socialism is hardly new. Does anyone really think the American bishops have been in cahoots with these sinister forces? Indeed, *Centesimus* encourages the bishops' advocacy of economic justice, and celebrates the church's social doctrine as a "valid instrument of evangelization."

What the encyclical grants to market mechanisms it does not take away from its witness to injustice or defense of the poor. Its praise for the freedom and efficiency of market economies doesn't prevent it from denouncing the marginalization and impoverishment advanced economic systems impose on the peoples of the third world and the economically disenfranchised close to home. The nature of wealth and power changes—and *Centesimus* has interesting things to say about our information age—but conditions of "inhuman exploitation" continue to exist. *Centesimus* strongly supports labor unions, the provision of economic necessities to the needy, fair wages, full employment, and decent public services. If it criticizes the welfare state, it does so on behalf of the dignity of the poor, not to justify the moral irritation of the well-to-do. "Even the decision to invest in one place rather than another," the pope writes, "is always a moral and cultural choice." So much for the magic altruism of the Invisible Hand.

What can be said in capitalism's favor, however, is that human beings are made for freedom, and that an essential part of that freedom must be economic. Economic creativity and initiative must have space in which to flourish. *Centesimus* warns

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against utopian schemes that attempt to eliminate self-interest, arguing that such arrangements misunderstand the nature of the human person and inevitably lead to tyranny. Even for unbelievers the hermeneutical value of the doctrine of Original Sin should be evident.

By the same moral measure, economic life is not an end in itself, and if treated as such leads to social disorganization and decay. Material goods are intended for the benefit of all, not for a small minority. *Centesimus* has a great many necessary things to say about unregulated capitalism's failure to protect human dignity and about the limits of the market. "There are many human needs which find no place on the market....Even prior to the logic of a fair exchange of goods and the forms of justice appropriate to it, there exists something which is due to man because he is man."

Centesimus marks the centennial of *Rerum novarum*, Leo XIII's encyclical on the economic and social upheavals surrounding the "industrial system," the replacement of land by capital as the source of wealth, and the subsequent transformation of traditional culture and notions of authority. Leo condemned socialism while promoting trade unions and the right to private property. Classical liberalism's materialistic philosophy and secularizing politics were also judged deficient. In taking up all these issues, *Centesimus* offers an inflated view of Leo's influence and his prescience in opposing state socialism. Moreover, while acknowledging the developmental nature of papal social teaching, *Centesimus* seems tone deaf to the sometimes jarring dichotomy between its own defense of human rights and the church's historical record.

Centesimus affirms market economies oriented to the common good, warns against the spiritual dangers of consumer culture, and advocates new international structures devoted to peace and to development in the third world. It presents an ambitious and frequently brilliant defense of human dignity that places economic and political life against a deeper, transcendent perspective.

"The church has no models to offer," the pope cautions. Though definitive judgments about particular market structures are beyond its authority, the church's traditional understanding of the principle of subsidiarity is offered as the best practical guarantee of social values and human rights. While the state does not have unlimited authority to intervene in the operations of the economy, neither does the market have unlimited power to dictate the conditions of political and social life. A plurality of interests and competing rights checks both the state and the coercive tendencies of commercial life.

This absolute respect for human dignity challenges the consumerism of the West as much as it exposes the historical crimes of communism. Most radically for the privileged West, *Centesimus* calls for a "concrete commitment to solidarity and charity." Charity, in the most obvious sense, may be the easier response. But solidarity with the poor and marginalized demands a conversion of the heart that the very logic of freely exercised self-interest rebels against.

Along this line, the pope's analysis of the sources of alienation in modern consumer cultures is as penetrating as his condemnation of totalitarianism. "A person who is concerned solely or primarily with possessing and enjoying, who is no longer able to control his instincts and passions, or to subordinate them by obedience to the truth, cannot be free," he writes. "Indeed, it is through the free gift of self that man truly finds himself.... A society is alienated if its forms of social organization, production, and consumption make it more difficult to offer this gift of self and to establish this solidarity between people."

Most fair-minded observers would agree that these are hard sayings. But a more generous acknowledgment by the pope of the economic and political achievements of liberalism or even democratic socialism would have helped lay the ground for alternatives to such "American" temptations. Indeed, a more realistic appraisal of secular values and achievements will be needed if a truly democratic vision of the common good is to prevail.

For those called upon to uphold Christian values in pluralistic, essentially secular societies, *Centesimus* is hardly a tidy package. It does not, for example, come fully to terms with how the free markets it extols and the liberal doctrine of individual rights it now embraces have come in the last several decades to be shaped by almost purely consumerist assumptions. Moreover, the church puts forward a welcome case for human rights based on faith in revealed truth about the transcendent nature of human life. Though the constitutional ground of Western democracies draws on this Christian tradition, today's political conversation usually does not admit of such a transcendent possibility. The process of truth-seeking, not truth itself, is the basis of individual freedom in the West, where a respect for pluralism forecloses the appeal to "absolutes." In this context, the pope alludes to the "suffocating" power of Western materialistic assumptions. He is right. But where does one go for breathable air without forfeiting modernity's real achievements along with its excesses? They are very much of a piece. The church's celebration of human freedom may seem naive when contrasted to the radical contingency at the heart of modern consciousness.

Similarly, *Centesimus* advocates the reinvigoration of intermediating social units such as the family, communities, and trade associations. But modern, postindustrial society, by its very thrust toward efficiency and uniformity, can be at war with such autonomous structures. Our mass culture, which has elevated reason and individual choice to a nearly infallible status, relativizes all so-called "natural" allegiances, increasingly leaving the individual alone before the concentrated power of the state or unrelenting economic forces. *Centesimus* identifies "a crisis within democracies themselves, which seem at times to have lost the ability to make decisions aimed at the common good." But what it proposes—an embrace of modern knowledge and skills without a loss of moral absolutes—goes to the very heart of modernity's moral ambiguity.

Furthermore, the encyclical calls forcefully for sacrifices from developed nations and for new international structures for economic development. What specific steps can be taken to further these goals remain vague, however. Advanced nations are not likely to surrender power or reduce their standard of living on the basis of sentiment alone.

Centesimus annus is provocative. This pope's first-hand tes-

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timony on the evils of totalitarianism and his mostly clear-eyed understanding of the contradictions inherent in secular democracies carry authority. Still, *Centesimus's* warnings against secularism and atheism may sound anachronistic to American ears. But that is perhaps a cultural deficiency of our own. One thing is certain: what Catholicism has long called spiritual, the modern world may yet come to understand as a practical necessity. That is the lesson the pope draws from Eastern Europe's miraculous victory over communism—the lesson he would like us to draw in the West in our own battle against indifference, depersonalization, and alienation.

ET CETERA

GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE We have received a magnificently brilliant communication from the brilliantly magnificent academic vice-president of a pre-eminently foremost East Coast Catholic university. Excerpts:

"I am following up on our recent phone conversation and am enclosing the names of ten graduating seniors...that I am requesting you enroll as subscribers for one year."

This is followed by a list of ten names with addresses, tastefully arranged on the page. Then, our almost favorite sentence:

"Would you kindly bill me for $360."

And here's the topper:

"High among the desired outcomes of this little exercise is that the graduates will become lifelong readers of *Commonweal*. My best wishes to you."

And to you, our optimal blessings. To the donees, a warning. Your renewal habits will be monitored.

THE CHARACTER OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES

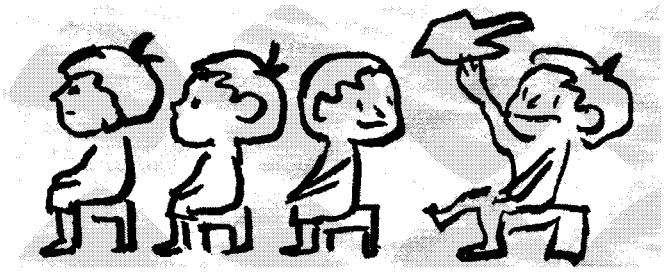
BLAND SECULARISM?

HOW TO KEEP THE FAITH

The Catholic college, America's leading bellweather Catholic theologian, Rev. Avery Dulles, S.J., has warned us in the *New York Times* (May 1), is on "the slippery path" from strong religious identity it possessed at its founding to the bland secularism of state and Ivy League universities.

And that the *New York Times* has noticed in a front-page story what Catholic educators have been talking to themselves about for over twenty years may well be a sign that it's too late to do anything about it.

The real problem is not the unending string of side-show controversies—homosexual or pro-abortion speakers, clubs, and



student newspaper editorials at Fordham, Georgetown, Boston College, or Marquette—that raise ecclesiastical eyebrows, but much deeper: a lack of shared intellectual values for the institution to pass along.

If the Catholic college, as a distinct American educational force, were to disappear, what would be lost? Historically, Catholic colleges and universities have done two things well: As denominational liberal arts colleges, they have helped keep alive what Page Smith calls in *Killing the Spirit*, the "classical Christian consciousness," the conviction that we are governed by natural laws which mirror the mind of the creator; and have thus sent out "inner-directed" men and women who make both good graduate students and servants of the community.

As professional schools, they have moved generations of Catholics out of the anti-intellectual ghetto of the immigrant church into the nation's courtrooms, legislatures, operating rooms, city rooms, and stock markets.

Above all, though this effect is hard to measure, they have taught many of their graduates that the love of learning and the desire for God can often be the same experience.

But today, how are these schools different? Recently, a candidate for academic dean here, asked in an open forum what he saw as distinctive about Catholic and Jesuit education, replied that "education is education." Here and elsewhere, candidates for faculty and staff positions asked to comment on a goals and mission statement, say they "have no problem" or "find it compatible." Which means that they want a job in this part of the country and can tolerate the ideals of their employer. Maybe that's enough.

But can an institution where only a small minority of the faculty embrace rather than merely tolerate the institution's goals give a both catholic and Catholic education to young men and women?

I live in a student residence hall; I look out my window in the morning and see Tulane University, literally ten yards away. If my own university's identity is to have any meaning at all, it must not be simply that it is "personal" or "caring" or "urban" or even dedicated to "peace and justice." It must nourish, criticize, create, and communicate a "truth," an intellectual vision not available next door.

The trouble is that—largely as a result of the hyper-professionalization of higher education and what Page Smith describes as the cult of "scientific" objectivity which has virtually purged the professor's moral judgment from the classroom—the Christian humanist as a species is almost extinct. In religious studies departments, for example, the last generation of the broadly educated humanists may be the priests and ex-priests in their fifties, trained in philosophy and the classics as well. Today's

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new religious studies Ph.D. may be a master of one sect or Epistle—and may or may not believe in God.

There are three ways in which Catholic colleges might revitalize their Catholic character.

First, the faculty, freely and collectively, would have to decide that it is essential for their future for the college to stay Catholic and, according to its own tradition, different. This means that just as they seek to hire blacks and women, they would seek religious order priests and nuns, and laypersons who, regardless of their religious commitment, are concerned about the ethical dimensions of the arts and sciences.

At The College of the Holy Cross, for example, where I was academic dean, 1981-85, one of the most traditionally "Jesuit" faculty members was a young, non-Catholic political scientist, Maurizio Vanicelli, who died suddenly this winter. A Roman Jew, who often put more effort into critiquing student papers than students put into writing them, he would draw the students into long debates and pump them about what "Jesuit" education meant—something we Jesuits seldom do.

Six years ago, as Holy Cross dean, I proposed that the economics department search for a new faculty member who to some degree either shared or saw the relevance of those basic principles of economic justice developed in the American bishops' pastoral letter on the economy—for example, the need to consider the human consequences of economic decisions. If I were to make the same request today, it might be for someone with expertise in the ethical issues raised by *Centesimus annus*. A good number of the faculty took this as an invasion of their prerogatives, an assault on their academic freedom. Holy Cross was one of the "best" Catholic schools in the country, but I had badly misjudged the degree to which the faculty—many hired from top graduate schools in the last ten years—shared the mission of the institution.

Nevertheless, the hiring process is the key to identity, and the chair or dean or president who will follow up on this is as rare as the philosophy candidate who has read Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson and plans to put them on the reading list.

Second, the trustees and president must reinforce the college's identity through vigorous leadership—through eloquence, hands-on management, and, above all, governing with unquestioned fairness and integrity. Otherwise, faculty and student critics, with some justification, will seize the unoccupied moral high ground and demand: "How can a university call itself Catholic and/or Jesuit and still (fill in the latest controversy): fire Professor Friendly; *not* fire an incompetent like Professor Friendly; etc...?"

But moral leadership becomes more complex and difficult every day. Priest-presidents, if they are not careful, tend to identify with their secular, fund-raising peers, and put as much energy into their own self-protection as does any politician; while priest-faculty identify with their professional peers and think they owe their fellow religious no more loyalty than they do their fellow laymen. Thus, the problem is often not a lay-clerical split, but a lack of common vision within a religious order.

Third, achieve some minimal agreement on curriculum wherein all students would read a few fundamental primary texts—Luke, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Newman—central to the Christian tradition. Faculty politics and priorities being what they are, it would be an extraordinary accomplishment to teach every student something as brief and basic as the Four Gospels within four years. Yet, would anyone argue against that idea? Of course. Which brings us back to where we began.

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., is a journalism professor in the communications department at Loyola University in New Orleans.

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

LIGHTEN UP, GUYS

GIVE AS GOOD AS YOU GET

I read recently that Bishop James T. McHugh of the Catholic diocese of Camden, New Jersey, just across the river from Philadelphia, has accused the Philadelphia *Daily News* of "crass anti-Catholicism" after the newspaper printed an editorial cartoon ironically contrasting the Catholic position on choice in abortion with its position on choice in schooling.

The April 4 cartoon pictures a Catholic bishop saying, "Yes! I am for choice in education." The cartoon bishop then adds: "I am for the state giving your tax money to parents to give to me so I can teach their kids to be against choice in abortion."

The real-life bishop was not amused. "Because the Catholic church dares to speak out against abortion—thereby confronting the press bias in favor of abortion on demand—Catholics become the victims of mockery and contempt," Bishop McHugh retorted. "I think it's high time that Catholics mobilized themselves to reject bigotry and insult."

Now, I'm as opposed to anti-Catholicism as the next fellow, and I want to go on record as being particularly opposed to "crass" anti-Catholicism, which sounds like an especially unpleasant variety of the species. So when the bishop puts together his campaign to reject "bigotry and insult" against Catholics, he can sign me up.

The trouble is, I am not aware that there is any significant bigotry directed against Catholics in present-day America. In Northern Ireland, yes. But in the United States? Tell me where Catholics are discriminated against in housing, employment, admission to schools and colleges, access to government services, etc. If this sort of thing is going on, I haven't noticed it. Perhaps I lead too sheltered a life.

"No, no! You miss the point," someone will tell me. "What we are complaining about are not the gross forms of discrimination you just itemized; that kind of thing pretty much died out earlier in the century.

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No, what we're complaining about are the more subtle forms of prejudice—for instance, the offending cartoon in the Philadelphia *Daily News*."

I see. But (pardon me for saying this) the cartoon does not strike me as being insulting or bigoted. In fact, I think it is rather clever, pointing out, as it does, an apparent inconsistency in the Catholic position on choice: pro when it comes to schools, con when it comes to abortion. You don't have to be anti-Catholic to say that. In the vigorous give-and-take that ought to characterize public debate in a democratic society, the blow delivered by the *Daily News* cartoon falls well within the Marquis of Queensberry boundaries. Score one debating point for Signe Wilkinson, the artist who drew the cartoon.

The proper response to a hit made in a debate is to attempt a counter-thrust. You don't shout "low blow" every time someone lands a punch; instead you punch back. For instance, the Wilkinson cartoon cuts both ways. If Catholics and others who are prochoice on schools while being anti-choice on abortion can be called to account for their apparent inconsistency, so they in turn can call to account for those Americans who are in favor of choice in abortion but not when it comes to schools. The former can challenge the latter: "I see you support the right to abortion because you believe choice to be something like an absolute value. Then why don't you direct your attention to elementary and secondary education, where choice is very limited? Why don't you crusade for parental choice among public schools and vouchers for children going to private schools, including Catholic and other denominational schools?"

Bishop McHugh, instead of complaining about dirty pool, might have responded with something along these lines. The bishop could defend his apparent inconsistency by saying: "I consider choice to be a very great value, but not so great that it should take precedence over what I believe to be a human life." This is a more convincing reply to the inconsistency charge than the reply the abortion prochoice person would have to make: "I believe choice to be so important a value that it even takes precedence over what may possibly be a human life—though of course choice is not so great a value as to take precedence over the public school monopoly of elementary and secondary education." In such an exchange you would have to score a point for the bishop.

When it comes to being a prejudice-detector it helps to have a very thin and sensitive skin, like the princess who felt the pea under ninety-nine featherbeds. I have spent so many years in local and state politics, where abuse, whether veiled or open, is the stock in trade, that I must have developed a thick skin. At all events, it seems to me that America today is on the whole a remarkably tolerant country. In fact it is arguable that it has become too tolerant about certain matters of elective behavior.

But some people see things differently. They feel that bigotry is so rampant in the land that strenuous campaigns to intimidate others from speaking their minds are warranted. And such campaigns often succeed: witness the great number of writers, politicians, and academics who bite their tongues lest their words be misunderstood and they find themselves accused of racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, etc.

Let's not toss the charge of anti-Catholicism about too casually, thereby adding Catholics to the list of those who refuse to debate, who prefer to silence their critics by charging them with some psychological infirmity or moral depravity. It is only the other day, remember, that Catholicism emerged from several centuries of hostility to intellectual freedom—centuries marked by the Inquisition (both Spanish and Roman), the trial of Galileo, the *Index of Prohibited Books*, the "Syllabus of Errors," and a general spirit of defensive authoritarianism. By way of atonement, it might be a good idea to spend the next few centuries on the other side of the fence. American Catholics, including bishops, ought to be the friends of rational debate; let others disgrace themselves by resorting to intimidation. Provided we are free to respond, we should relish attacks made on us by our critics. Let American Catholics be happy intellectual warriors.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

CIVILITY REVISITED

CATHOLICS UNITED FOR THE FRAY

A friend who had been out of the country called me from New York the other day to ask, "Whatever did you write to bring on those letters to the editor in *Commonweal*? I can't get the point." He was referring to letters from the Reverend Robert Hyde [March 8, 1991] and James A. Sullivan, vice-president of Catholics United for the Faith [April 19], commenting on my column, "Mending Catholic Manners," in the issue of January 11.

His question highlighted one of the problems of all journals of opinion—how to provide continuity in discussion when there is a significant time lapse between the ini-

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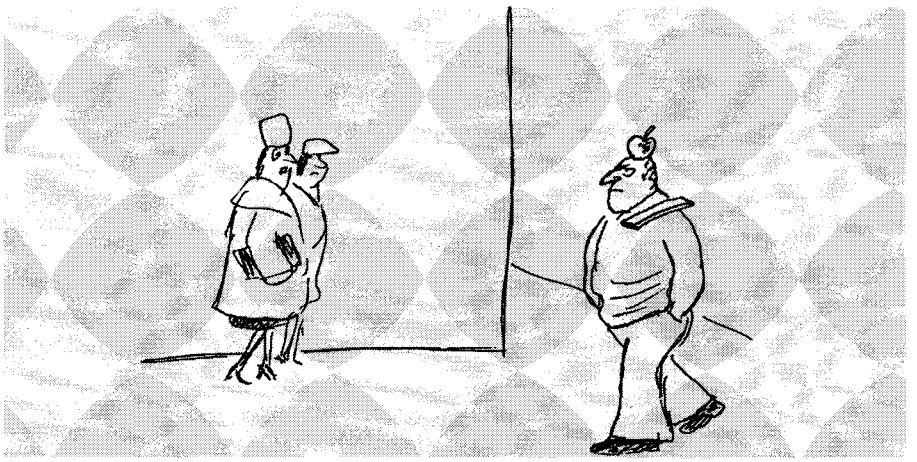
tiation of the subject and the responses—in this case, two months between the column and one letter, and three months between it and the second. Weekly news magazines do not have the same difficulty. Their editors publish snippets of letters commenting on the reporting of the news and content themselves with juxtaposing letters of criticism and approval. An occasional editor's note may follow a letter questioning facts. *Commonweal* and magazines like the *Atlantic*, *Harper's,* and the *New Republic* must decide on whether the discussion is worth continuing or whether the author or editors should defend the original thesis against attack. Hence, the frequency of such headings in their letter columns as "The Editor Replies" or "John Smith Answers" or "The Editors Reply" (cf. *Commonweal*, April 5, 1991).

I am faced with the editor's problem in responding to my friend's question. Should I prolong the discussion of civility in the church by connecting the letters to the column which initiated the discussion? Are manners that important? On reflection I think they are. Consider just one fact. Every day, every night, young black men add to the nation's homicide rate not only because of drug wars but because of "dissing"—that is, because other young men have been perceived as showing them disrespect. Judith Martin, etiquette columnist (who now lectures on the philosophy of manners at such institutions as Harvard, Johns Hopkins, and The Philadelphia Philosophical Society), compares the phenomenon to the practice of dueling in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The demand for respect is deep and apparently innate; in both cases there were then, and are now, few appropriate social forms in the subculture to head off the violence. The law alone was not then, and is not now, strong enough to prevent killing. When there are no social forms to prevent it, violence breaks out.

In Judith Martin's definition, etiquette consists of the voluntary restraint a society agrees to in the area between the obedience to selfish impulse on the one hand, and conformity to what is legal on the other. It is, in that sense, a regulative system that allows us to live peacefully together. Where it is lacking, that which offends pushes us toward conflict.

Certainly wars will not break out or executions occur as they did in the past because of a lack of civility and charity in the church, either in Catholics' relationships to each other or to those beyond the church's authority—the lack about which I wrote in "Mending Catholic Manners." But if we do not accept the constraints of courtesy we exacerbate tensions, deepen fissures, and divide those who should be united.



"He's *looking for trouble!*"

To achieve this civility and charity requires constant vigilance in regard to vocabulary and practice. The first letter writer, the Reverend Robert Hyde, was right, I feel, in pointing out that I had fallen into less than civil discourse myself when I endorsed by quotation Vernon Ruland's characterization of Evelyn Waugh and John Cardinal Newman's contemptuous descriptions of the Anglican church as stemming from "a *neurotic* [italics mine] hankering for absolutes." He writes, "...the word *neurotic*, unless used as a clinical diagnosis, is an insult, plain and simple." Of course, *neurotic* is a pejorative word, and perhaps I could have excised it from the quotation without harming its thrust. But I do not think, by using it, Ruland meant to say that Waugh or Newman were neurotics, the inference that letter-writer Hyde seems to have drawn. (Perhaps my own liking for Waugh and deep respect for Newman, a literary mentor for much of my youth, prevented me from seeing the possibility.) Nor do I think that my citing of Ruland was an "appalling lack of courtesy." The reader can see, however, from this give and take, how hard it is to use effective words without giving offense.

Letter writers not only write to criticize but often also to introduce another aspect of the subject under discussion. And so with Father Hyde. He finds, he says, that the discourtesy in Catholicism centers more on the "left/right" divide than on the lay/clerical divide "and this discourtesy seems to affect all Christian churches." I think he minimizes the lay/clerical divide but he is right about the "left/right" divide and expands the subject by including it in the continued discussion provided by the letter column.

And then there are letter writers who have an agenda of their own and latch on to the ongoing discussion in order to advance that agenda. I'm afraid that is the case with James A. Sullivan. Catholics United for the Faith are dedicated to defending the church against attack. They evidently identify enemies everywhere, even if it means reaching into the seventeenth century to impugn the motives of reasonable, peaceable Thomas Browne, the Anglican layman and scientist I cited as a pioneer in religious civility. Browne held that wise believers "know that a good cause needs not to be patron'd by passion." Mr. Sullivan compares Browne's refusal to use the terms for the pope common to his Protestant contemporaries to tactics of the present-day political candidate who says "while my opponent has descended to the level of the gutter to attack me I will not retaliate by raising old charges, etc., etc., etc." This is reaching for offense. Browne used the terms "Antichrist," etc., only as examples of the "usual satires and invectives of the pulpit" which he was urging the clergy to avoid. We are far from civility when we take up cudgels against the dead.

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AN IMPERFECTLY JUST WAR

JOHN LANGAN

PART OF THE UNCERTAINTY IS FACTUAL

The conflict in the Persian Gulf has been a war of mixed signals and contrary intentions; a war that many people feel need not have been fought; a war that is unlikely to resolve the problems of the Middle East. Both proponents and critics have attempted to evaluate it in moral terms. President George Bush assured the American people that this conflict was indeed a just war, a conflict between good and evil, right and wrong. The U.S. Congress debated the morality and the timeliness of the war and gave its less than resounding approval.

The critics of the war have had a hard time staking out a counterposition. It is not possible to offer a convincing apologia for Saddam Hussein, who has shown considerable ingenuity in finding ever novel ways to outrage world public opinion, from mistreating the citizens of Kuwait, to exhibiting prisoners of war on television, to polluting the waters of the Gulf, torching Kuwait's oil industry, and, most recently, crushing the Shiites and the Kurds. Saddam Hussein is a serial aggressor, a man ready to use lethal force against his opponents, a man who has invested large sums for a long time in building a war machine meant to bully and abuse his neighbors. In the face of the vast array of military personnel and technology that the coalition assembled, he refused to give up his hold on Kuwait. This combination—a bloodthirsty and tyrannical adversary and the mobilization of vast forces by a diverse coalition led and orchestrated by the United States—left much of the religious leadership of the United States in a quandary about whether to accept or to condemn our use of force against him. More broadly, an entire generation of Americans who acquired a deep distrust of government and the military from the sad experience of Vietnam were left searching for an appropriate framework for interpreting this very different situation.

The analogies that critics of the Gulf War tried to make to Vietnam and the war of attrition on the Western Front between 1914 and 1918 were rendered useless by the rapid pace and conclusion of the war. But so was Bush's comparison of Saddam Hussein to Hitler, which came to seem overdrawn as the weakness of the Iraqi forces became apparent. No doubt, such analogies provided orientation and legitimation for advocates of alternative policies as they confronted the uncertainties of the Gulf conflict, but finally they did not prove useful or convincing.

Just-war theory is the primary instrument that ethicists have for surmounting conflicting perceptions, analogies, and claims that naturally develop in any debate over a violent conflict. It commits us to a critical and questioning attitude to any war. Though the theory itself offers neither a blanket condemnation nor a blanket endorsement of this most dangerous and destructive human activity, it operates with a strong presumption against the use of violence. It includes elements that require the exercise of sophisticated and informed political judgment, and it recognizes the complexity of political disputes.

From August 2, 1990, when Hussein's troops seized Kuwait and converted it into the nineteenth province of Iraq, there was a strong basis for arguing that a war for the liberation of Kuwait was morally justified. A basic principle of international law requiring respect for the sovereignty of states was violated without

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warning. The brutal occupation of Kuwait, the seizure of its assets, the dispersal of large numbers of its citizens and residents compounded the original crime. Kuwait was entitled to wage a war of self-defense and to ask for help both from its allies and from states concerned over the threat to international order presented by Iraq. From the beginning the requirement that there be a just cause for hostilities was present.

But the course of events ensured that this factor counted for less than it would normally. First, whether as a result of the speedy response of the United States to the Saudi request for troops or because Hussein's original plans had not extended beyond Kuwait, it quickly became apparent that the Iraqis were not going to invade Saudi Arabia or to annex its oil-producing areas. Second, the Kuwaiti government was not able to mount a sustained resistance against the Iraqi invasions and occupation, which was carried out with overwhelming force. There is no evidence that any significant element of Kuwaiti society, with the exception of some Palestinians, preferred Iraqi occupation to the rule of the al-Sabah family. Third, once the occupation of Kuwait was complete and overt hostilities ceased, Iraq settled in to exploit its victim and to integrate Kuwait into its territory. The initiative—the decision to launch a war to undo the Iraqi aggression—passed to the United States and to those states that found Hussein's hold on Kuwait profoundly objectionable. All of these factors obscured reality: the fundamental act of war had been committed by Iraq with little provocation or warning. Then, it took several months for the coalition to assemble sufficient forces to make threats that would be plausible to Hussein, a guileful and unyielding leader. During that time, the allies and other concerned powers had time and opportunity to explore alternative ways of resolving the dispute without resorting to war. That interval was lengthy, but it makes more difference for political perception than for moral analysis.

John Cavadini

May Is the Military Month

May is the military month
When light keeps booming like a battery
And the sky rolls fresh with clouds
Like an energetic sea.
Blossoms flicker like the tickertape
That drifts through Jubilees, and
Cheering trees promulgate an ecstasy
At which their fluttering presides.
Propaganda runs in purple rivulets
And pools among the grass,
And even the flies step out and
Exercise to the tulips' brass.
Almost none resist,
Although the lilac stands aloof.
She bears her obtuse beauty
Like a stigma, or a spot,
Each several frond a gash in the Universe's side,
Through which blood and water flow.
Towards sunset there are robins
Which like opposing guards
Exchange themselves across the vacant lawn,
And then the sun goes down.

It is true that the brutal character of Saddam Hussein's regime did not prevent various powers from collaborating with him before the invasion of Kuwait. France, Germany, the Soviet Union, and the United States had all in different ways provided support for what the world now agrees was a murderous, tyrannical, and aggressive regime. The history of Western dealing with Saddam Hussein's regime over the years before 1990 exhibits a mixture of wishful thinking and willful ignorance, of economic greed and legalistic formalism that Western governments often adopt when they find themselves facing a distasteful despotism with which, for various reasons (good and bad), they think they have to deal and which they think they are powerless to alter. It is true that large portions of the West, including governments and the media, have come relatively late to a clearheaded recognition of Saddam Hussein's threat to peace and order in the Middle East. But the failure to see this point early does not invalidate a policy that attempts to reverse a mistaken judgment before its consequences become catastrophic.

Another requirement that a just war must meet is that the war must be conducted by competent authority. In this regard, it is extremely important that the war on Iraq was authorized by the UN Security Council on behalf of the international community, by several states in the Middle East, and by the U.S. Congress. The Bush administration, which had unwisely attempted to operate on the principle that the war did not need congressional authorization, fortunately agreed to the congressional debate that took place before the January 15 deadline. Congress took its share of the responsibility for the decision, and the possibility that the war would lead sooner or later to a constitutional crisis was avoided. The debate reminded us both of the gravity and of the inescapably political character of the war.

Just-war theory also includes a requirement that the war being considered must have a reasonable prospect of success. From one angle, this was never a problem for the coalition in the Gulf. There was little doubt that the U.S. and its allies would prevail against the highly militarized but very vulnerable society of Iraq. The main uncertainty was not about ultimate victory but about the level of casualties that would be required to achieve this result and therefore about the willingness of the American public to sustain the war effort. The Iraqi army, while technologically inferior to the allies, was a large and experienced force. The key step for the allies was to convert their air superiority into a decisive edge in the ground war. This was done by hammering the ground forces from the air, by misleading the Iraqi command about our plan of battle, and by encouraging desertions from

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the relatively inexperienced troops near the frontier.

From another angle, the prospect of ultimate success was, and remains, uncertain. If we move beyond defining success only in terms of military victory and think of it as including significant progress toward making the Middle East a more secure and peaceful region, then we have to admit that our technological superiority and our ability to win battles in the air and on land can do little more than buy time for working out a settlement that the major players (including popular movements as well as governments) are prepared to live with for the short- and medium-term future. It may well be that "winning" in the present crisis does little more than preserve us and our allies from disasters that would have undermined our entire position in the Middle East if we had not successfully resisted Saddam Hussein.

Questions about success and objectives were given many different answers during the months from August to January. The lack of clear answers made it difficult to determine whether the military option met the just-war criterion of proportionality. Were the objectives sufficiently urgent and important to make war both necessary and plausible as a course that would prevent serious evils and were they likely to produce a better outcome than nonviolent alternatives? President Bush and the military leadership repeatedly spoke of our objectives as: (1) the eviction of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and (2) the enforcement of the relevant UN resolutions. This constituted what I would call the minimal objective for the coalition forces, and it enjoyed widespread support around the world. It was also an objective that was always obtainable by the free consent of the Iraqi government. But some government and military officials and many participants in the public debate spoke of more ambitious objectives. Occasionally, their language lacked conceptual precision and diplomatic finesse, for instance, when assault on various parts of Saddam Hussein's anatomy was presented as a desirable objective.

In the public discussion there was a certain inevitable escalation of objectives; these included the removal of Saddam Hussein and his regime as well as the removal of the weapons of mass destruction that the Iraqi military had been accumulating. The first of these more ambitious objectives would be attained, it was hoped, either as a consequence of defeat or as the result of an internal coup. It is a matter of regret to nearly everyone that this did not happen. The second objective is one that the coalition has chosen to pursue by limited means that fall between the complete occupation and demilitarization of the country, and a tortuous and lengthy process of arms control negotiation. Including the disarmament requirements within the cease-fire provisions was a positive move in that it combined two morally compelling objectives: the end of hostilities and restrictions on Iraq's ability to develop more weapons of mass destruction. Further objectives such as the territorial dismemberment of Iraq and the destruction of its people and culture were ruled out by President Bush. They were seen to be morally unacceptable and devastating for the long-term stability of the Middle East and for the future of American relations with the people of the region. At least this seemed to be the view that would have drawn general assent before the revolts in northern and southern Iraq. These revolts raised the troubling question of whether the unity of Iraq could be preserved without enormous human suffering or without reliance on dictatorial methods.

Clarifying the war's objectives came relatively late in the public debate, which made it difficult to determine whether the war could meet the just-war criterion of proportionality. My own judgment is that taken together the following factors justified the resort to war: (1) protecting the principle of the inviolability of sovereignty (especially in an area that contains a number of very vulnerable states); (2) preventing Iraq from achieving a weapons capability that would enable it to attack the major population centers of the region; (3) thwarting Saddam Hussein from achieving a predominant position in the world oil market; and (4) terminating the grave human rights abuses that his regime inflicted on the people of Kuwait and Iraq. I am not claiming that the United States and its allies have consistently defended these values in their foreign policy, only that these and related considerations about attainable objectives and values to be protected against an aggressor provide a reasonable basis for affirming that the test of proportionality between the means and the end was met in this decision to go to war.

Though the oil supply was a common theme of analysts and cartoonists, of commentators and protesters, no serious moralist regards the U.S. maintenance of gasoline at $1 per gallon as a justifying reason for any use of violence, much less for a full-scale war. Sustaining this folly is not worth the bones of a single American or allied soldier. Industrial economies have shown that they can make the adjustments required to pay for increased oil prices. Nonetheless, there was a morally serious reason for being concerned about higher oil prices: their negative effect on the nations of Eastern Europe and the third world. The history of OPEC shows that, even while the world depends heavily on a small number of producers in one highly volatile region, the direction of oil prices is not simply up and that the forging of a consistent policy within the oil cartel is extraordinarily difficult. What Saddam Hussein's seizure of Kuwait threatened to do was to start a chain of events that would give him both enormous wealth for carrying out further aggressions as well as a decisive voice in allocating one of the world's most essential commodities, particularly if he were to control, directly or indirectly, Saudi supplies.

The norm in just-war theory that has probably been most prominently invoked by critics of the Gulf War is that of last resort. This requires that alternatives to war be tried and found wanting and that the only way to maintain justice—and the values that are wrongfully threatened by the adversary—is to fight. Like the criterion of proportionality, it is applied through a judgment about a situation that is particular, complex, and changing. So we can expect significant and serious disagreements about whether this criterion is met or not. The major exception to this point is in cases of self-defense. Pearl Harbor and the subsequent German declaration of war abruptly terminated the internal American debate of 1940-41 about whether and to what extent the United States should intervene to stop Axis aggression in Asia and Europe.

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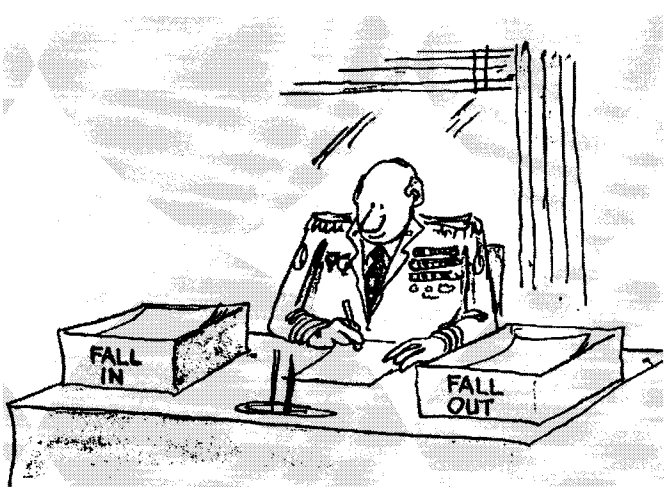
There is no doubt that alternatives to fighting were offered to the Iraqi government and that the coalition would not have fought a war if Kuwait had been evacuated. But it also became clear that Saddam Hussein was not inclined to pull out of Kuwait even when the threat of war became credible and imminent. He resembled Don Giovanni in the last scene of the opera, who, with his hand firmly in the grasp of the Commendatore, persists in saying "no" to every urging that he change his mind. So far, Saddam Hussein seems to have fared rather better than the Don.

The key question about last resort is whether less coercive measures, particularly sanctions, would have been sufficient over time, and whether the diplomatic process was pursued with sufficient vigor and commitment from August through January.

We can see that the primary task of U.S. diplomacy was to build and maintain the coalition against Saddam Hussein. It was particularly important to cut the connections between Iraq and the Soviet Union, which had long been its primary source of weapons and military and technical expertise. On closer inspection, the worldwide coalition against Saddam Hussein is really divided into two coalitions. The first, a very broad coalition of states concerned about Iraq's violation of Kuwaiti sovereignty, was likely to be satisfied by achieving the minimal objective of evicting Iraq from Kuwait. The second, far narrower coalition demanded a decisive reorientation in Iraq's external policy, for which the defeat or removal of Saddam Hussein was an indispensable requirement. This coalition is unstable, since it agrees on the need to alter the direction of Iraq's foreign and military policies while its members disagree on how they understand this need and what they would put in place of Hussein's regime. Such disagreement is not surprising since this narrow coalition includes Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Egypt, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It thus includes states that are not keen about being seen in public agreement with each other as well as states that have fought wars with each other in the recent past. The narrow coalition presents us with a situation in which nations are willing to take very strong measures against a common adversary but cannot be relied on to cooperate over an extended period of time. France, Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union took positions that fall somewhere between the broad coalition and the narrow one.



The United States had to function as the leader of both. To maintain the broad coalition, Saddam Hussein was offered a no-frills deal: withdrawal from Kuwait without a retaliatory attack. But this left many observers unsatisfied, presumably not because they thought it unjust but because they thought it unlikely to be acceptable to a leader with his ambitions. At the same time, the United States had to avoid agreeing to concessions that would shatter the confidence of key members of the narrow coalition that the United States really was prepared to use force against Iraq. The Israelis, in particular, had strong and understandable objections to allowing linkage between the Gulf dispute and the claims of the Palestinians.

It is clear that no lasting peace in the Middle East is possible without a resolution of the Palestinian issue. Those who had been hoping for an international conference or some other process requiring the Israelis to deal with the Palestinians were too inclined to think that a complex negotiation aimed at a peaceful settlement of both Kuwait and Palestinian demands was an avenue worth exploring. This overlooked the possibility, indeed the likelihood, that the conference would fail on both counts with a consequent shattering of the coalition and with the Iraqis more deeply entrenched than ever in Kuwait. Of course, even an unsuccessful conference is less a disaster than war; but not if it ends in a way that makes a war on less favorable terms even more likely. It also overlooks the point that, precisely because there are important elements of justice in the Palestinian cause, it is important not to allow them to be captured and exploited by an unscrupulous demagogue like Saddam Hussein, whose interest in the Palestinians is secondary and manipulative. His invasion of Kuwait has cost the Palestinian community billions of dollars in aid from the Kuwaitis and Saudis, in remittances from Palestinians working in Kuwait, and in losses experienced by refugees and costs borne by those aiding them.

What about the sanctions? It seems to me that this was the hardest matter on which to come to a judgment. Clearly, it would have been a great gain for international order to have this kind of crisis solved with nonlethal measures. The best hope for sanctions did not turn on a general slowing down of the Iraqi economy or on the denial of essential food and medicine to the Iraqi people (which were not included in the embargo), but on the denial of spare parts and military supplies. But such a denial would only constitute serious pressure on Hussein if there were a powerful military force in the region capable of making the shortage of supplies a starkly urgent priority. Enforcing the embargo over a period of time, particularly since this would have meant maintaining the narrow coalition on a war-ready footing while preventing major evasions of the embargo, would have meant that U.S. allies in the region would have had to carry considerable stress in a situation of continuing tension. Given the requirement for a continuing deployment of substantial forces and the constraints that the climate and the religious calendar would have put on military operations and thus on the plausible threat to Iraq, a strong case can be made that the January 15 deadline was a reasonable decision.

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I have grave reservations about the major increase in U.S. forces after the November congressional elections. But this is primarily a problem about the administration's lack of candor in dealing with the American people. On the one hand, this deployment made our threats of military action against Iraq considerably more credible. Yet it inevitably created more pressure for a shorter timetable for the working of sanctions and other measures.

It will take independent scholars and observers a long time to determine what further steps the United States and its allies could or should have taken to achieve a diplomatic solution. But I believe that in the last analysis, the decisive judgment is one that was reached by most of the Middle East powers and that has been confirmed by Hussein's behavior during the last nine months. That judgment is that (1) Iraq under his rule was deeply committed to an aggressive and destructive policy; (2) Iraq posed a threat to almost all of its neighbors; (3) war with Iraq was inevitable at some point; and (4) such a war was best conducted before Iraq's arsenal was capable of dealing catastrophic blows to its neighbors. Those who hoped that this war could be averted or, at least, postponed did so in the honorable belief that better ways of resolving this dispute and others like it should be tried. This was not a false or foolish belief; the point is that the nature of this particular adversary and what we could reasonably expect from his regime made it inapplicable.

The course of the war made it clear that we had underestimated the tenacity and obduracy of the Iraqis and that we had overestimated their effective fighting power. This double error cuts two ways. In the first instance, it underlines the enormous difficulty that sanctions would have encountered in changing Iraq's policy. In the second, it undermines some of the more dramatic claims about what Iraq could have done to its neighbors and enemies. One important sign of progress is that a serious and conscientious effort was made to observe the principle of discrimination or noncombatant immunity. This was easy to do in the ground war which was waged in the desert; in the air war, new technology, and the nearly complete control the allies established over Iraqi air space made the observance of this principle much easier than it has been in previous wars. This did not eliminate the problem of civilian casualties, some of which are inevitable given the confusion and ignorance found in combat situations, and some of which are the result of inherently controversial judgments over how to proceed in attacking military targets embedded in an urban or civilian setting.

After the fact, more questions have been raised about whether the war was conducted in a proportionate way or, whether the allies inflicted excessive or unnecessary casualties and damage on Iraq. Granted that the electricity and communications systems are legitimate targets, was it possible to restrict the damage to Iraq's infrastructure so that the civilian population would be less at risk than it now seems to be? Answering such a question requires more knowledge than either proponents or opponents of U.S. policy possess. Looking to the future, I would argue that more care should be taken to protect civilians from the consequences of a catastrophic demolition of the infrastructure that modern societies rely on to sustain life. In this matter, however, the Iraqi people are as much the victims of their own government's intransigence (which makes humanitarian aid both hard to offer and hard to deliver) as they are victims of the coalition's bombs.

I have grave doubts about whether it was really necessary to bomb the Iraqi troops retreating from Kuwait as intensively as we did. Certainly, as the stories of their occupation of Kuwait made clear, many of them were no innocents. Later events also made it clear that Iraqi military power was far from totally destroyed. While retreating troops who have not indicated an intention to surrender are a legitimate military target, they did not constitute an immediate or serious threat to our own troops or military operations. Given the inevitable imprecision of warfare, it is reasonable to err on the side of mercy and life when one's forces are in an overwhelmingly dominant position, even if this means allowing some of the enemy to escape.

Whether the casualties inflicted by the air war on Iraqi ground troops meet the test of proportionality is a matter of some uncertainty. Part of this uncertainty is factual. It is very unlikely that any one (Iraqi or American or other) knows with any accuracy the number of Iraqi soldiers killed by the air war. What can be given are reasonable estimates and neither side has been forthcoming about these. Another part of the uncertainty arises from the imprecision inherent in the notion of proportionality itself. For this reason, military officers and many moralists prefer to restrict their effective concern to the principle of discrimination. But this invites us to take the lives of soldiers too lightly; for surely it is possible to kill enemy soldiers without necessity or proportionate benefit, and this has to be wrong. But the criterion is extremely hard to apply in the course of war. Would it have been possible to stop the bombing and begin the ground war at a point where we would have lost a thousand troops and the Iraqis would have lost twenty thousand, rather than fifty thousand or more? Such an outcome seems preferable. But how is any commander in a position to make such calibrations with confidence that things will work out as anticipated? I leave aside the political difficulties involved in judgments that seem to trade American lives for enemy lives. The criterion of proportionality should direct military planners to prefer strategies that will minimize the loss of life on both sides; but once chosen, a strategy has to be pressed home vigorously. Whether there ever came a point at which reasonable commanders should have concluded that the Iraqi soldiers had taken enough punishment and that further hammering of their positions harmed them far more than it could possibly benefit us and our allies is something that I do not know.

Many of us, especially after the great changes in Europe in 1989, were hoping that prospects would brighten for more peaceful methods of settling disputes and that in the future, we would not have to confront the situations that have historically made just-war theory an essential part of social ethics and of Catholic moral theology. The fact that we have not reached such a point is a tragedy, especially for the people of Iraq. At the same time it can be no surprise for those who have grasped the persistence of injustice in our world. □

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AN INFAMOUS VICTORY

THE BURDEN OF PROOF LIES WITH THE WARRIORS

GORDON C. ZAHN

"But what good came of it at last?"
Quoth little Peterkin.
"Why that I cannot tell," said he:
"But 'twas a famous victory."
Southey, *The Battle of Blenheim*

The thousands of Kurds and Shiites already killed and the thousands yet to die as victims of hunger and disease are "collateral" victims of the Gulf War. Added to the one hundred thousand dead according to General Schwarzkopf's estimate of Iraqi military deaths in that blessedly brief conflict, the combination provides new and terrible evidence of the inhumanity of modern war and the utter irrelevance of the traditional "just-war" teachings. Primary responsibility for the horrors Iraq and Kuwait have suffered lies with Saddam Hussein as instigator, but this cannot absolve those who planned, ordered, and executed one of history's ugliest wars of their guilt for the excesses committed in response. It is a recurring lesson of human history that injustice can give rise to still greater injustice and, when nations are involved, usually will.

Though I do not accept the validity of the "just-war" tradition as a source of Christian moral guidance, I feel obliged to play the rhetorical game. It is the theological language Catholics are expected to speak. But *it is a game*. Were the conditions of the "just war" ever honestly applied to an actual war, they would lead to behavioral conclusions identical to those required by the pacifism to which I personally subscribe.

Real wars, alas, are never put to that test. Consider the advice offered Christians of the Third Reich by a popular Catholic theologian during World War II: It was not the time to raise the question because a scientific judgment of its origins could not be made until the documents of both sides were available. So what should one do? "*Now the individual has but one course open to him—to do his best with faith in the cause of his nation.*"

One welcome change was that people did "raise the question" during the war in the Gulf. Even more remarkable, they included Catholic bishops who publicly voiced the judgment it was not a just war. Some even advised service-eligible young people to consider becoming conscientious objectors and reminded the faithful of their moral duty to respect and support those who chose to do so. Other bishops, of course, echoed the assurances of "legitimate authority" that the villainous enemy left no option but to go to war and agreed with President George Bush that the cause was "just, moral, and right."

Members of the professional theological fraternity followed suit and, except for a few dissenters, were able to find (if necessary, create) flexibility in interpreting the conditions so as to avoid burdening Catholics with too troubling a crisis of conscience. A few, more imaginative, introduced new qualifications ("just but unwise") or categories ("an imperfect just war"). The majority concentrated on other matters and, if they had misgivings about the morality of the war, held their tongue. Yet if ever there was a war suited to putting the traditional teaching to the test, it was Mr. Bush's war in the Gulf. A good case can be made that most, if not all, of the "just war" conditions were ignored or violated.

The injustice of Hussein's aggression is beyond challenge, but that does not in itself constitute a just cause for a massive military response. Already under Pius XII the favored interpretation held that only defensive war can meet that test. His successors, especially John XXIII, narrowed that still further until we have John Paul II declaring (in 1982), "Today the scale and the horror of modern warfare—whether nuclear or not—makes it totally unacceptable as a means of settling differences between nations." Read in that context his last-minute appeal for peace ("...Never again war, adventure without return; never again war, spiral of struggle and violence; never this war in the Persian Gulf...") deserved more of a hearing, not only in Washington, but in our major chancery offices as well. It mocks logic to claim that tens of thousands of bombing sorties over Baghdad and a full-scale crossing of the Saudi/Iraqi border was "defensive." Aggression, even in reprisal, does not automatically make for a just cause.

At face value the resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council could be considered "legitimate authority." This too, though, was flawed by the deceit and manipulation which reduced the adoption of the resolutions to a thinly veiled and carefully orchestrated *fait accompli* in the Bush administration's determined drive toward war. After persuading a none-too-eager Saudi Arabia to "invite" the U.S. forces, Secretary of State James Baker pro-

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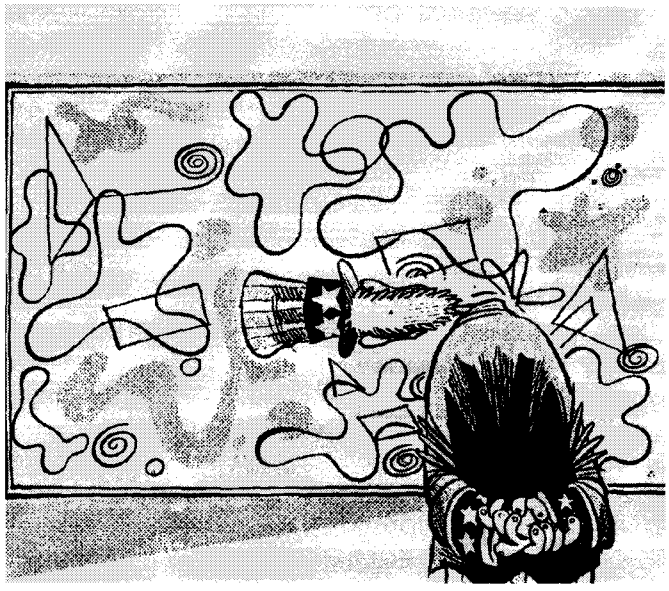
ceeded to construct a façade of international participation by intensive diplomatic bargaining and sometimes dubious concessions. The final touch was the reluctantly sought and no less reluctantly given congressional vote endorsing the use of force. What at times degenerated to a crudely personalized contest between President Bush and Saddam Hussein gained respectability in a finely woven cloak of international unity covering a war planned by, proposed by, directed by, and fought by the United States. Other nations provided token forces and funds, but in essence it was strictly an American enterprise.

The stated purposes kept shifting and expanding without ever being given a clear and consistent definition. The demand for removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait was always there, expressed in terms of moralistic indignation that, once victory had been achieved, seemed to vanish. The promised restoration of the Kuwaiti emirate, though something of an embarrassment, was also a constant. The restoration of Mideast "stability" and the promises of a "new world order" were added as attractive packaging for the determination to assure "friendly" control of the area's oil reserves. Perhaps the most explicit statement of presidential intent was "kicking Hussein's ass" and this, deserved though it might have been, is not enough to meet the test of right intention.

The reasonable expectation of success was certainly present; indeed, it is difficult to see how success could have been anything short of a foregone conclusion. If those charged with the responsibility for preparing and planning for this war were really as concerned about the military threat posed by Iraq to the U.S. forces as the general public was led to believe, it would testify to either inexcusably inadequate intelligence operations or rampant Pentagon paranoia. Already the yellow-ribboned, flag-waving frenzy of victory is giving way to more sober second thoughts and increasingly uncomplimentary comparisons with grossly unequal contests. No, little Peterkin, future historians will not record the Gulf War as "a famous victory." As more of the grim facts emerge, it may even become a cause for national shame.

The conduct of the war violated the "just means" condition in several ways. Credit must be given to the officially declared intent to achieve precision in the bombings and discriminate between military and civilian targets; and this was matched to a commendable extent by performance. But neither intent nor performance could overcome the fact that the very technology of war—the weapons and the uses for which they are designed—is indiscriminate by nature. If, as reported, 40 percent of the "smart" bombs miss their target, sometimes by as much as five miles, the performance record of "dumb" bombs (several times the tonnage of the former) will be worse. The results of "precise" massive bombings become impossible to calculate in advance and probably no less difficult to assess after the fact. Similarly when "military targets" include the full-scale assault upon a society's infrastructure (usually located or at least headquartered in urban centers), the risk of excessive "collateral" civilian destruction and deaths becomes a certainty too great to justify bombings of the scale and intensity of the campaign unleashed against Iraqi cities and their inhabitants.



Discrimination is not the sole determinant of the justice of the means, however. The obligation to control and limit their effects to insure that no more damage or injury than necessary is done *even to combatants* must also be considered. Here, too, technology presents a problem. The administration's vulnerability on this score is reflected in the unwillingness to provide an official estimate of enemy casualties, civilian or military, and its annoyance with General Schwarzkopf's "indiscretion" in making his estimate public. Not that the general was concerned about this moral principle of limitation, however. His obvious dismay that the cease-fire deprived him of the opportunity to complete the "battle of annihilation" already in his grasp illustrates how little weight was assigned to theological niceties in military planning or execution. Day-long carpet bomb raids shaking the earth; cluster bombs maiming and napalm incinerating forces cornered in dugouts and bunkers; new techniques for setting the air itself afire—these instruments defy both discrimination and limitation. The shocking story of the "highway of death" where panic-stricken troops in full retreat were trapped in a "killing box" and slaughtered from the air in what was jokingly compared to "a turkey shoot" and "shooting fish in a barrel" provided irrefutable evidence that not only the technology but also the execution were designed for massacre, not the "just war" of traditional theology.

It is the failure—actually the *refusal*!—of President Bush and his advisors to give priority to seeking other solutions short of war that should be enough to clinch the case against the Gulf War. The unwillingness to allow a reasonable time for international sanctions already in place *and having effect* to succeed, coupled with the adamant refusal to even consider negotiations or support the efforts of coalition partners seeking a diplomatic solution, constitutes an explicit violation of the requirement that war be a last resort, that all other means must have been tried and have failed. It was this demonstration of presidential intransigence and impatience that caused some of our leading bishops to break with tradition and publicly challenge the justice of an ongoing war.

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There remains that all-important final condition: proportionality, the requirement that the good to be achieved must outweigh the evil or harm to be done. Surely those who planned the campaign and chose the weapons and strategies must have anticipated the extent of the injury and destruction Iraq and its population would undergo. A high Air Force officer was disciplined for publicly describing what the air war could (and did) achieve. One assumes, too, allowance had been made for a far greater number of U. S. casualties in ground combat than actually occurred. In their exaggerated assessment of Hussein's strength planners must have realized that these costs would far exceed the risks entailed in allowing a reasonable time for the sanctions to have full effect. Especially since those "risks" were, at best, hypothetical—on the one hand, the danger that delay might weaken the commitment and participation of coalition partners; on the other, fear that the continued expense of maintaining large military forces on extended desert duty, coupled with morale problems that might develop, would lessen support on the home front.

The rush to war, then, represented the choice of *certain* evil over *potential* inconveniences that might arise. By even the most generous of interpretations, this does not meet the test of true proportionality. This will become clearer as the actual costs are tallied — when to the widespread physical damage in Iraq (and Kuwait) and the as-yet-uncounted totals of dead and wounded on both sides in the actual hostilities are added untold thousands of victims of the futile uprisings incited by President Bush and the CIA along with thousands more doomed to death as refugees. "But what came of it at last?" That, I suspect, no one will ever know in full detail.

Those who object that my application of the traditional conditions is too rigid and does not prove the war unjust miss the crucial point. It is for those who initiate (and support!) a war to establish beyond reasonable doubt that it does meet these tests. This is where theology fails. When a distinguished American theologian is quoted as saying bishops should have left it "up to the people in the military and political realm professionally to make the best judgments they can and sincerely try to apply these principles," he echoes his German counterparts of World War II. The advice cited earlier recommended obedience in blind nationalistic faith; this interpretation would go beyond that to grant the privilege of making the moral judgment to Hitler and his generals.

Vatican II's urgent call for "an entirely new attitude toward war" remains unanswered. When a blessedly brief and regionally limited war takes so horrible a toll in human life and devastation, there can be no excuse for further delay. The just-war tradition, for good or ill, began as a response to a sequence of dramatic social changes that created a situation in which the Roman Empire no longer sought the eradication of Christianity (and the extermination of Christians) but, instead, had become its protector and promoter. Now it faced the threat of invasion by barbarian hordes. In that sociological context, the Augustinian concessions represented an "entirely new attitude" and provided a welcomed accommodation to a reality in which many, perhaps most, Christians had already found it convenient to reconcile the demands of their faith with obedience to Caesar's.

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One may grant that Augustine and others who later added their elaborations and embellishments intended to preserve the essence of earlier teachings by restricting the practices of violence and war. They may have succeeded to some extent, but their accommodations introduced the flexibilities and modifications that have permitted Christians ever since to kill on either or both sides of virtually every war that comes along. And do so assured they were fulfilling God's will!

We face a situation created by changes in the nature of war, by a technology of such inhumanity that it must no longer be accommodated with adherence to Christian principles and belief. Human beings created in the image of God have become appendages to (or victims of) competing killing machines. Theologians may stretch concepts and strain logic to the limit, but any attempt to fit this fact into traditional patterns of moral discourse must inevitably fail.

Bodies piled high at Austerlitz and Waterloo were buried, and the grass ultimately covered all. Not so with the scatter of uncounted and uncountable body fragments shoveled into unmarked desert graves. One U.S. soldier interviewed by Boston's *Globe* confessed to being haunted daily by the memory of battlefields strewn with Iraqi soldiers' "arms and legs and pieces of their faces." With Wilfred Owen it is fair to ask: "Was it for this the clay grew tall?"

Poets can pose the questions; theology must provide the answers. The technology of modern war has brought us back to the choices faced by Christians in their pre-Constantinian commitment to pacifism and nonviolence. In their 1983 pastoral the bishops speak of having "only begun the journey toward a theology of peace" and called upon theologians to make specific contributions to "this desperately needed dimension of our faith."

What is more urgently needed is a new (perhaps a resurrected?) theology of war. Putting aside learned discourses and *summae* of the past, theologians might—like Augustine—"start from scratch." All they really need for the task is the New Testament and some pictorial and testimonial histories of recent wars. They might consider, too, the plight of that young man cited above with his haunting memories and his even more troubling conclusion: "I don't have any questions in my mind that we should have done what we did, but I will carry this forever." *Not even questions in his mind*? If we have reached the point where one can witness these things, perhaps even do these things, and still, though troubled, *accept* them, we confront the ultimate question any truly Christian theology must ask and answer: Was it for this he hung upon the cross? □

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FREEDOM TO RESIST COERCION

AUGUSTINE, AQUINAS, VITORIA...

FRANCIS X. WINTERS

The invitation to assess the future prospects for the just-war theory is at the same time a summons to review its past: to read at least a selection of the classic texts in their historical contexts: Augustine, Aquinas, and Vitoria establish a standard by which to measure the utility of just-war thinking in the future. To undertake this assessment at the present moment, in the still turbulent wake of the inaugural war of the "new world order," is especially apposite because each of these earlier teachers on the justice of war himself wrestled with the moral meaning of "the new world order" in which he lived. Among other continuities in their work, we should note their common insistence that the novelty of the order they experienced was precisely that it was an international—rather than a world—order. That is, each insisted that the only war that is just is the war that defends the borders between nations, not the imperial campaign that eclipses ancient realms. The right to sovereignty is the common principle that animated these theological systems.

The contribution of Augustine (354-430) to this tradition is deceptively modest. It was merely a matter of an image, an image apt enough to support an entire cultural structure. The image was a paradoxical one, which Augustine introduced—apparently with some diffidence, even embarrassment. In the second book of the *City of God*, Augustine contrasts the decadent state of Rome at the time of its collapse (A.D. 410) with the pristine virtue of Rome's founders. His aim in this polemic section was to lay the blame for Rome's destruction by the Visigoths squarely on the Romans themselves, rather than on the "impiety" of the Christians. In this *apologia* for Christianity, Augustine suggests that the only community which can be called just is the church itself. Augustine's tentative expression of this claim employed his new image: "In fact, true justice has no existence save in that republic whose founder and ruler is Christ, *if at least any choose to call this [the church] a republic*."

Augustine's hesitancy was appropriate. For the experience of Christians living in the Roman republic (and its sequel, the empire) had been one of cyclical persecution: the church's memory was one of martyrdom at the hands of Roman rulers. Augustine here proposes that Christians begin now to think of themselves in the same terms as the pagan society that had been their persecutor: the "commonwealth," or "city." Throughout the *City of God*, Augustine had been belaboring the heritage of the Roman state by comparing it to the behavior of criminals. The state, he had contended, was "banditry writ large."

In this context of vilification of the Roman political system, Augustine paradoxically claimed the same name, that of the commonwealth or republic, for the church. This bit of imaginative banditry seemed to surprise even Augustine himself. But he took this theological risk to encourage the church to demand equality with the state in the direction of society. He here chartered the course of social dualism, the systematic competition between church and state for leadership in society, which continues to differentiate Western society from other cultures. With something as insubstantial as an image, Augustine laid the foundation of the rivalry between church and state that inspired much of the drama of medieval history, such as the defiance of King John by the bishops and barons gathered at Runnymede (1215).

But what has the city of God got to do with war, or war with the city of God? Further on in the text, Augustine reminds his fellow believers that they live inextricably intermingled with nonbelievers, whose historical destiny they share. What befalls the city of man shapes the destiny of the city of God. These rival communities are sheltered by the same city walls from the threat of annihilation or coercion. Self-defense is a moral right and duty, even for Christians.

The shock that drove Augustine at the age of fifty-six to undertake his most difficult intellectual and literary challenge, writing the *City of God,* was the sack of Rome by the Vandals in 410. In Africa, shock waves struck even the secluded cathedral of Hippo, where Augustine presided as bishop. Skeptical as he had shown himself to be of the virtues of Rome, its destruction by the Gothic hordes made Augustine intensly aware of the fragility of life. He awakened anew to the call of patriotism, the moral imperative of shared vigilance against the rising tide of disorder. After awakening his hearers to the church's equality with the state, he now exhorts them to fulfill their duties to their common civil order. Patriotism, he taught, was preeminently a Christian virtue.

It was perhaps no intellectual triumph that Augustine redis-

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covered the virtue of patriotism. It was surely, however, a triumph of persuasion that he alerted the church to its temporal responsibilities for manning the city walls against the invader. He did so by patient analysis and comparison of all the Scriptures (old and new) concerning war and warriors. He concluded that faith could not dispense with force. Indeed, these two must be brothers if the city of God was to be spared for its earthly pilgrimage. Augustine's articulation of the doctrine of the just war is nothing more, nor less, than that. Having, with his image of the church, defied the absolutism of the political order, he now effectively preempted the possibility of Christian absolutism.

His exhortations unfortunately were ineffectual. Shortly after his death (430), the walls of Hippo came tumbling down. The invading forces burned the cathedral in which he had taught daily for thirty-nine years, leveled the lovely town (second largest of Roman Africa), and burned most of the libraries.

In another such crisis, perhaps the most sweeping revolution of European politics since the fall of the Roman Empire in Augustine's time, it was not a bishop, but a friar, Thomas Aquinas (1225-74), laboring under the suspicion of the local bishop, who turned to Augustine's writing to analyze the troubles of his day. Thomas, who appears to have had little intellectual curiosity about war itself, perfunctorily recites (*Summa theologiae*, Q. 40) the conventional wisdom of the just-war theory of his day, which had advanced well beyond the elementary formula of Augustine for the defense of the city walls. Aquinas included in his uninspired repetition of the tradition the results of later centuries of reflection by canon lawyers on the methods of war. It was these canonists who had added to Augustine's spirited theological defense of the right of defense the common-sense notion that even defense must be limited. Certain classes of people were to be spared direct attack in the event of war. This slowly developed legal and theological tradition had worked out the moral logic of war, namely, the insistence that the right to wage war, like all other rights, is bounded by the existence of other competing rights. Augustine's ethic of the (defense of) the city walls was now balanced by the inviolability of the hearth, that is, by the societal priority to go on living even in the midst of a justifiable resort to force.

If the crisis of his century (and of the early years of the fourteenth century as well) had been merely a routine resort to force among warring princes, Aquinas's articulation of the newly refined just-war tradition would be largely irrelevant to modern thought and thus to our present crisis. His prophetic contribution to the tradition stemmed rather from his preoccupation with the underlying political movement of his age, namely, the deliberate dismantling of the Holy Roman Empire from below. Paris, where he taught, was then, in the person of the king (St. Louis), asserting its independence from the jurisdiction of the Holy Roman Empire. Here was a political problem (the moral status of a kingdom vis-à-vis the empire) novel enough to engage Thomas's mind. Thomas, on theological grounds, encouraged the king to defy the authority of the (German) emperor. He based his judgment on the common-sense perception that these nations (France and German) were by reasons of language, geography, and culture, different from one another. The law of nature, therefore, clearly required separate legal systems and independent sovereigns. With this theological judgment, a tradition of sovereignty was articulated which persuaded the pope to revise the code of canon law in 1312, terminating the authority of the emperor over neighboring kings.

With Thomas's theological brief on the side of national sovereignty, the definition of just cause in war was revised: From then on, any king had the right to wage war to defend the security of his national borders from encroachment by the empire. Aquinas, like Augustine, did his thinking in the midst of revolutionary political developments. As Augustine thought through the consequences of the end of the Roman empire, Thomas gave intellectual fuel to the fire of nationalism sweeping across the European landscape and reducing the Holy Roman Empire to a tiny fraction of its earlier reach. His revolutionary political theology was thus the ingenious response to unprecedented questions, the emergence of a postimperial order within Christendom. (Thomas balanced his defense of the king's right to independence from the emperor with an equally spirited defense of the king's subjects' right to rebel if the king acted tyrannically. Thus he balanced the right of revolution against the newly fashioned right of sovereignty.)

With this balanced structure of competing political rights, Thomas refined the tradition about the legitimate causes of war. When Pope Clement V in 1312 sided with the claims of sovereign autonomy from the emperor, the pope was adopting the theological defense of sovereignty sketched by Aquinas. From that moment, the theological and canonical question of the status of sovereign kingdoms was settled for the European theater.

Not until 1492 did a variant on the question of Christian empire arise again. Then it was in a different context, namely, the imperial expansion of the Spanish power into the newly discovered territories of "the Indies." Accompanying the explorers and *conquistadores* were Dominican missionaries who set about baptizing the Indians and mastering their many languages for the sake of instruction. They also established among themselves, and their convents in Spain, "committees of correspondence" about the novelties of life in the new world and their perplexities about the rights of Indians against the Spanish colonial rulers and soldiers. They raised anew the venerable question of the just war in the new setting of the age of discovery.

The Spanish Empire in America was only thirty years old when a Basque, Dominican theologian, Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546) arrived from Paris (where he had lived in Thomas Aquinas's former convent on the Rue St. Jacques) to teach at the University of Valladolid, which was the seat of the Council of the Indies, the newly founded Colonial Office. He was thus at the center of the "new world order" of colonialism. He was likewise apparently part of the Dominican network of missionary correspondents, which kept the friars better informed about the conditions of the Indians in the new world than the king was himself. Ten years later, after he had been promoted to the chair of theology at Salamanca, Vitoria began to lecture on the new

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moral questions of the right of Spaniards to fight wars of colonial expansion. His views were unvarnished: There is no right to conquer by force the ancient civilizations of the Aztecs. Armed resistance by the Indians, moreover, does qualify as a just war.

Whether it was because he was Basque, and therefore sensitive to the injustice of Spanish conquest, or because he was a theologian familiar with the Thomistic principle of the right to sovereignty, or merely because he was thoughtful, Vitoria proved impervious to the carrots of ambition (the archbishopric of Toledo) and the sticks of intimidation (the imperial inquisition) proffered to persuade him to "get on the team." Besides defying King (and Holy Roman Emperor) Charles, Vitoria also challenged the claim that the pope had authorized the Spanish conquest, pointing out that, in doing this, the pope was exceeding his spiritual authority. Aquinas would easily have recognized his theological heir. Wars can be justified only after establishing a just cause for the resort to force; empire, Vitoria argued, was not among these causes. Vitoria here displayed the ethical instinct which characterizes seminal contributions to just-war thought: the rare gift to grasp the novelty of a political moment and to weigh the merits of conventional wisdom at that juncture. What almost everyone hailed as progress, Vitoria viewed as problematic.

"The new world order" is a phrase with an unsavory past, adopted hastily by President George Bush to celebrate the end of the cold war—a phrase that has now come back to haunt him. It is being wielded daily like a truncheon, at dawn by op-ed writers and at dusk by MacNeil-Lehrer debaters, to second-guess the president. The novelty the phrase evokes is undeniable, even though the old order that it dismisses was fleeting indeed by historical standards, a mere forty-five years. But the implied expectation of the phrase, that the newly inaugurated order will be worldwide and orderly, is illusory. Indeed, the first outcrop of the era appears threatening to any semblance of order: the Balkans are once again a powder keg; the Baltics no less. The ominous portents appear most immediately in the form of maps of Kurdistan, not found in Rand-McNally, but which greet us daily on the front pages of the newspaper. The new-order maps picture Kurdistan, which exists only in memory and hope, superimposed on five rival nations, Iraq, Turkey, the Soviet Union, Syria, and Iran. Sophisticated representations compound this surrealism by adding an overlay indicating the erstwhile boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. Facing this reality, the haunting eyes of Kurdish children search for their place on the map.

What will the new order mean for the Kurds? How will the international community adjudicate these competing historical and moral claims? The first instinct, perhaps, is to resort to the cliché: "it would take the wisdom of Solomon" to solve this riddle. Only a moment's browsing in the Book of Kings, however, confirms one's suspicions: Solomon's reign was a precursor of our problem rather than a promise of its solution. For Solomon, one of the towering political leaders of his day (961-922 B.C.), who brought Israel in one generation to the forefront of regional

politics, financed his achievement with Pharaonic cruelty, including the effort to eradicate the tribal identities of his people. The only auspicious chapter in this story is the dénouement, the revolt inspired by the prophet Ahijah, who fanned the tribal fires of resentment and snatched ten of the tribes from rule by Solomon's son, Reheboam, leaving only Judah as his inheritance. From tribal chieftain to tribal chieftain in three generations.

Solomon's contribution to our present impasse, then, is not what the conventional image might suggest, namely, a pithy formula that will unlock the riddle of the post-"Operation Desert Storm" order. We can learn, however, from the folly of Solomon. For the historical Solomon provides in the biblical tradition the same paradigm of tyranny more familiar to many from the tomes of political history and philosophy. Solomon, trying to dazzle his people into forgetting their ancient tribal identities (by the splendor of his new temple) reaped a whirlwind of rebellion. This story thus confirms for Christians (as well as Jews and Muslims) that the natural law rights of revolution and secession do not represent some alien, Aristotelian and therefore pagan, wisdom within Christian theology, but rather echo the commonsense corollaries of an historical pattern; repression begets resistance. Tyranny's fathering of revolt is all we need to remember of the genealogy of morals. This homely truth is, as Jefferson wrote of his own declaration of revolution, "the common sense of the matter."

To speak then of war as the way of wisdom is to state somewhat paradoxically the inner core of both the natural law and biblical traditions of ethics: that a doctrine of rights is the articulation of outrage against aggression (even our own). Just war (international or domestic) is nothing other than the force of freedom's resistance to coercion. All the scholastic refinements of this cry of protest are nothing but the syntax of resistance.

In this context, conscience, finally, is a sentinel who stands guard to warn against the approach of coercion. It is the rider from Boston to Lexington, awakening the city to its imminent peril.

One school of political ethics, that called the just-war tradition, has in its (sadly infrequent) best moments, warned the people in due time of dire perils. Which of these warnings in the past might now serve to alert us to the peril of the new world order? Each student of this tradition will have her or his preferred author

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and marked passages. My own counsel at present would be for American Catholics (and kindred souls) to reread their Vitoria, who sought to warn his fellow Spaniards, as they embarked for America, to guard against the temptation to convert by coercion. Today, the same imperative of self-denial might counsel an uncommon American modesty about its role in the world. For the present moment, unlike 1919 and 1945, is not the American moment. This time, the president will be unable to play the role of *arbiter mundi*. In the new moment, the old international principle of sovereignty may be the warning America needs to recall from the just-war tradition.

The orchestration of Operation Desert Shield/Storm has been a test of American society, politically, militarily, and morally. It has thus been a fair test of just-war theory. On balance, the theory failed the test of providing wise judgment. The commentaries on the war seemed as ambiguous and unconvincing as the judgments of priests in ancient Rome assigned to scan the entrails of sacrificial animals to predict the chances for military victory. Many of the same essays merited the criticism that Thomas More directed to the scholastic theology of his day: "Like milking a he-goat into a sieve." Some have therefore concluded that just-war theory is at fault. The fault appears to me, however, to lie with many of the theorists on both sides who seemed unable to see the war for the weapons, the cause for the casualties. What was wanting in our recent political debate was sound political judgment. Perhaps the permanent crisis into which the world seems to be passing will yet call forth great theological judges, as preceding political crises did in the thought of Augustine, Aquinas, and Vitoria.

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SCREEN

WORKING GIRL

'LA FEMME NIKITA'

An old suspense-horror movie trick is used once again midway throughout the French thriller, *La Femme Nikita*, and once again it works, but this time with a significant difference. A young man, Marco, the boyfriend of the eponymous heroine, enters his girl's seemingly empty apartment. He calls her name and receives no answer. Ominous. As he walks from one room to the next, the obligatory faint noises in the background work on our nerves along with our knowledge that half the characters in this film are killers and one of them is bound to leap out and eat this poor kid. When will the menace jump out? Now! No. Now! No. Isn't there ever—there! It's happened. But it's only Nikita playing a little joke on her lover. She playfully jumps Marco and covers him with hugs and kisses. According to convention, this is the moment when we relax after giving the usual embarrassed laugh that acknowledges that, yes, the same damn cheap trick has worked again and we are nothing but Pavlovian pups.

But this time our nervousness isn't completely dispelled. It can't be because the lovely Nikita herself is the most industrious killer in the movie. She is, in fact, the major source of the film's terror as well as the chief object of its pity. She is a killer who has learned to love life. But, precisely in order to continue living, she must be willing to kill again for the masters who have resuscitated her life. A morally insensate murderess has become a lucid, life-cherishing assassin. When Marco is caressed by Nikita, we may feel as if we were watching a man being embraced by an affectionate python.

La Femme Nikita is the perfect title because it indicates the film's theme. *Femme*, with its manifold connotations of elegance, grace, seductiveness, and/or wifely dignity, seems to have no application whatever to the Nikita we meet at the beginning of the movie. A drug-polluted near-zombie who can only mutter "gotta have it" (a fix), she allows herself to be dragged by her equally abysmal cohorts into their burglary of a pharmacy. Police arrive and the ensuing violence leaves several cops and all the criminals except Nikita dead. One of the officers was killed by Nikita, and her unquenchably violent behavior under interrogation and during her trial is the very thing that gets her off the judicial hook. The French secret service (or whatever the Gallic equivalent of the C.I.A. is called), spotting a potentially ace assassin in the girl, spirits her out of prison and starts training her in various lethal skills. But since an assassin must present a civilized front in order to escape detection and must use intelligence and discipline to carry out missions, Nikita's new masters also detoxify her, teach her computer science, and, through the Pygmalion offices of Jeanne Moreau, give her an education in what can still only be termed "the feminine graces." After four years of training, Nikita's head is clear, her body fit, her exterior chic, her senses alive. And, attracted as she is to her chief spymaster, "Bob," she has discovered or rediscovered sexual love. Taken by "Bob" to an elegant restaurant, she basks in its luxuriousness and serenely contemplates the gift-wrapped birthday present that "Bob" has placed on the table. At last, she is an elegant woman and not a

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hopped-up slum rat. At last, she is *La Femme* Nikita.

Then she opens her gift. It's a pair of loaded, state-of-the-art handguns. "Bob" tells her to wait until he has left before killing the well-dressed couple at the next table. The tuition for Nikita's education has fallen due.

And that's the theme of the movie: entry or re-entry into civilization through the perpetration of uncivilized acts. Readers of spy fiction by le Carré and Len Deighton are familiar with the perception of espionage as the dreadful girder of society, but *La Femme Nikita* amplifies this perception by showing us a literally hopeless murderess restored to humanity precisely so that her murderousness may be perpetuated for the sake of (Western-world) humanity. If you think that Nikita's case is too special to apply to common humanity, consider the insistence of military leaders (a sincere insistence, I'm sure) that they don't want stupid, ill-educated recruits going into battle. There are obvious reasons for this. But one definition of an intelligent, civilized person may be this: the possessor of a consciousness that recognizes that other consciousnesses exist and are as precious as one's own. And one definition of a soldier in combat may be this: someone who obliterates other consciousnesses under orders. If you accept those two definitions even as only partial ones, then what military leaders demand of the intelligent soldier is that he or she be a living, anguished paradox. And that's what Nikita is. As the movie progresses, she becomes more and more aware of the contradiction that she is, and she starts to crack under fire.

This moral terror permeates a film which is also filled with the physical terror that any good espionage movie must have. Writer-director Luc Besson can stop your breathing any time he wants. But the violence he stages is calibrated according to what is happening to Nikita's mind. When she shoots a woman from a high window, Besson doesn't move the camera in for a close-up of the victim. At this point in her career, Nikita is keeping her mental distance from the atrocities she commits and Besson makes us share her detachment. When the distant body falls, it looks like a rag doll flopping over. But later, when a fellow agent with whom Nikita has worked closely and whose humanity she cannot deny is butchered in her presence, the blood seems to drench us while Nikita cowers in a corner. Mentally, we cower with her. The question of where to put the camera is always answered by Besson in reference to the moral stage his heroine has reached.

Nikita is played by Anne Parillaud. The controlled rawness of her acting makes everything she does here unforgettable and I intend the adjective to be taken almost literally. Since seeing the film, my brain has been playing and replaying many of her best moments: her feral outcry in the court when she receives a life sentence; her rag-doll dance of victory (to the strains of Mozart!) after she takes out her karate teacher with some unorthodox moves; the way she slightly tips a plate on a cafeteria table when "Bob" refuses to give her a furlough from training and the tension of her entire body seems to flow right into the see-saw motion of the plate; her terrified, hunched-shoulder invasion of an embassy while disguised as a male diplomat. A great performance.

To the role of her trainer and not-quite-lover, Tcheky Karyo brings a serenity that is more frightening than any overt toughness could be.

Movies like *Die Hard* and *The Terminator* work you over. *La Femme Nikita* works into you. You are zapped while you watch it and then find yourself, days later, actually *thinking* about this ultraviolent mutation of the James Bond genre. Thrillers that provoke thought without curtailing physical excitement end up being called classic thrillers. RICHARD ALLEVA

STAGE

TO HATE OR NOT TO HATE

'MULE,' 'LA BETE' & 'I HATE HAMLET'

For years, the phrase "Broadway play" has been a favorite pejorative in critical circles—academic ones, particularly. It was familiar even when works like *Death of a Salesman* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* were Broadway hits, but no one ever knew precisely what it meant. Commercial? Predictable? Unlikely to disturb the patrons? Any or all of those, I suppose, but Broadway has never been quite the pigeonhole that play sorters have imagined it to be. There have always been producers who took chances on unusual works—not good ones necessarily—that outsiders, with the wisdom of the uncommitted, could recognize as sure losers. Even now, with fewer and fewer plays on Broadway, there have been some odd creatures turning up and, for the most part, disappearing before I could get a review into print. Come to think of it, most of the things I review are gone before my comments appear, but that is because much of the interesting work today is produced by nonprofit organizations for limited runs. The three plays I briefly consider here, however, were presumably hoping for old-fashioned Broadway success.

Mule Bone may be a special case since it was produced by the Lincoln Center Theater, heavily financed by foundation grants, but it was at the Ethel Barrymore because the Lincoln Center's own main stage was filled by the long-running *Six Degrees of Separation*—a Broadway play, if I ever saw one. *Mule Bone* was written in 1930 by Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston, a collaboration that dissolved in disagreement, and it did not find its way to the stage or the page for more than half a century. For Hurston, presumably, it was still another of the works in which she wanted to present black life anecdotally in black vernacular; for Hughes, a poet who shared Hurston's concern with black language, it may have been an opportunity to turn to theater, a dream that would continue to draw him for the rest of his life.

This version of the play has been given a prologue and an epilogue by George Houston Bass, who according to a *Playbill* biography, is "responsible for melding the 1920s sensibilities of Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston with those of the audience in the 1990s." That means that he doctored the original

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script into stage life, greatly helped by the music of Taj Mahal. The play is a very slight tall tale—not unlike many of Hurston's stories—in which two friends, joined by the music one plays for the other to dance to, are split apart by a flirtatious young woman who likes the attentions of both. They finally fight over her, one knocking the other out with the titular mule bone, an event that leads to a trial which is mostly a confrontation between rival churches, an epic trading of insults which provides the main vitality of the piece. In the end both men reject the woman—who expects the man who gets her to take a real job—and stick with one another, their friendship, their music, and their freedom being more attractive than sparking which might turn into the trap of marriage. At the end, everyone forgets that the bone-wielder has been banished from the town, and the entire cast gets together for a musical finish which celebrates community that transcends any local quarrels. Those insults were never more than grand rhetoric, appreciated by insulter and insultee alike. *Mule Bone* ran for a few months, buoyed by its tremendous sense of fun and by a setting that drew black audiences who presumably had no desire to check out *La Bête* or *I Hate Hamlet*.

David Hirson's *La Bête* is about as unlike *Mule Bone* as one could imagine. Or any other recent play, for that matter. For one thing, it was written in rhymed verse, and I haven't heard anything like that since Van Johnson played the Pied Piper of Hamelin on television in the late fifties. It was not the Pied Piper that Hirson had in mind, but Molière, who is represented here by the anagrammatic Elomire. Elomire's company, a band of serious comics who, through Prince Conti's support, have worked themselves up from street fairs, find themselves menaced by Valere, whose buffoonery has amused the prince and whom he sees as the man to bring new vitality to a group of artists he believes have begun to go stale. The serious point of Hirson's elegant comedy is that in the marketplace of artistic ideas vulgarity will inevitably triumph. Most of the first act consists of a nonstop monologue by Valere, a *tour de force* that demands a consummate performer. So said most of the reviewers, meaning that Tom McGowan was not up to the task, but he did well by the piece and would have done better had he or the director (Richard Jones) not saddled him with repetitive cute gestures. There was some wit in the piece and a theme worth any playwright's attention, but the most impressive thing about the production was Richard Hudson's stark white oblique setting beautifully lit by Jennifer Tipton.

As I write this, Paul Rudnick's *I Hate Hamlet* is still running. It would be ironic if it should turn into a hit, proving that, after all, Valere was right about what audiences want. It is a foolishness about a television performer, just off a long-running series, who is about to play Hamlet in Central Park and who, not so coincidentally, has rented the famous John Barrymore apartment, the "Alchemist's Corner" that he designed as a kind of medieval retreat. Barrymore materializes in the person of Nicol Williamson, trying for parody roguish charm in the Peter O'Toole vein. Barrymore is there to help young Andrew master the role, but the performance is a flop. Yet a moment of success in the general disaster makes Andrew see the glory of the stage and he turns down a multimillion-dollar offer from the TV mavens to build the kind of solid stage career that Barrymore years before abandoned for the movies and the bottle. At that point, I felt a lump in the throat which turned out to be my gorge rising. Rudnick did not intend that ending for a joke, but, given the quality of much of the comedy in the play, it would have been a step ahead of dumb-Hollywood-director jokes, male-genitalia-in-tights jokes, cigarette-addicted agent jokes (Celeste Holm with a German accent), twenty-nine-year-old-virgin jokes. How funny is it really when a young woman in a Renaissance gown lifts her skirt to reveal that she is wearing sneakers? Is it knee-slappers like that that define a Broadway play? GERALD WEALES

Sandra Inskeep-Fox

Two of Us Dancing

"How picturesque they are, the missed trains."
—Jules La Forge

Stuck in the mirror frame, expectant
as morning,
no more faded than my memory,
she stands shaded by lilacs
and falling sun, caught cooling, perhaps,
but then amused as well,
as if she knows this is all
a passing fancy. Irrepressible, I
insist. Undaunted.

Flapper

dressed in sailor blues, the grass
beneath her a full and brilliant green
I dream for her heights to scale, a sum
to leave slightly larger
than this 5 x 7 Kodak print. She fairly
reeks here of Speakeasies, of
honkey-tonk, of young blood boiling,

of fashions and foolishness gone long
before we conspired together, reliving it,
recalling it all in kitchen scenes
the two of us dancing "Charleston,
Charleston," laughing amid
the pots and pans, and me begging to
see her please, oh,
please, "shimmy like my sister Kate."
just once before she put us all to bed.

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A penny saved is a mistake

THE GREATEST-EVER BANK ROBBERY
The Collapse of the Savings and Loan Industry
Martin Mayer
Charles Scribner's Sons, $22.50, 354 pp.

John Feffer

Although its roots extend back into previous administrations, the savings and loan crisis perfectly encapsulates all the venality, hypocrisy, and naiveté of the Reagan years. The rise and fall of this major U.S. financial institution ties together more convincingly than any conspiracy theory the strands of economic adventurism and deregulatory swagger characteristic of Reaganism. Martin Mayer's grand narrative of frontier finance supports a diverse cast of regional high-rollers, Wall Street sharpies, corrupt politicians, shrewd criminals, compliant accountants, and inept bureaucrats who meet and bargain, bumble and plot, advance millions and pocket billions of dollars. Even dogmatic Marxists could not have painted a more disturbing picture of the collusions of "late" capitalism.

But Marxists would never have imagined such a sexy story. With finance, crime, and "Dallas"-style high living, the newspaper and publishing industry have had a sure-fire winning combination that has generated a string of exposés. Yet the more titillating aspects of these exposés—extravagant parties fueled by champagne and cocaine, inside jobs by criminal elements, million-dollar private jets, tracts of worthless overvalued land—are frequently distracting. The S&L crisis, a disease with flamboyant symptoms, has complex internal causes which excite only the specialists. These considerably less compelling causes—changes in federal and state legislation combined with complex fluctuations in economic indicators—produced the graft and looting upon which the media has subsequently focused.

Despite its racy title, Martin Mayer's *The Greatest-Ever Bank Robbery* is precisely the sobering account that economic specialists prefer. Mayer eschews the overly dramatic in an attempt to explain, in often bewildering detail, the internal dynamic of the S&Ls' collapse. His is not a radical's dissection of capitalism's corpse (consult Robert Sherrill's seering article in the *Nation*, November 19, 1990) nor an apologist's downplaying of the affair's significance (consult the *Wall Street Journal*). Instead, Mayer offers a liberal critique. Capitalism, he laments, was simply not allowed to function properly.

By the late 1970s, the S&L industry had begun to undermine its once solid foundations. Helped by a government which, among other things, raised the ceiling for deposit insurance to $100,000, the industry began to resemble the classic pyramid structure: old loans were paid off by new loans, increasing the size of the institution but jeopardizing its solvency. This was not, Mayer implies, the market as Adam Smith intended. Risk under capitalism should not be insured; high risk should not therefore be highly insured. And yet the S&Ls maneuvered themselves with government assistance into this peculiar win-win situation. Rather than fail in an increasingly competitive atmosphere, the S&Ls grew like deadly oversized mushrooms.

> *As late as 1986, paying for the mistakes honestly and not unintelligently made in 1981 and 1982 might have cost something under $20 billion. By 1989 the price was probably just under $200 billion. The decision that year to structure the bailout along bureaucratic lines and to put it in the hands of the veteran bureaucrats doubled their ultimate loss. If the bank regulatory agencies have not learned from this experience, and there is evidence that they haven't, we can easily impose another doubling of these costs by failures in an overstimulated and overextended banking system.*
>
> —Martin Mayer
> *The Greatest-Ever Bank Robbery*

Still, Mayer points out, if the government had merely recognized in the early 1980s that the S&Ls were sick institutions, had closed them all, and paid off the deposits, the loss would have been comparatively small. Instead, Congress followed the deregulatory spirit of Reaganism to the letter. Instituting the Garn-St. Germain bill in 1982, Congress removed many of the regulations that kept S&Ls within certain bounds. Instead of slowing the false growth, Garn-St. Germain allowed the pyramid scam to grow. Thanks to Milken et al., S&Ls filled their portfolios with junk bonds to finance further loans. They created "daisy chains" in which parcels of land were sold back and forth, raising the price and therefore the book value of the plot each time, and creating "profitable" portfolios for what were essentially failing institutions. To cover their trails, the S&Ls paid off accountants to certify that they were healthy while the management continued to skim money off the top.

As Mayer points out, the manipulations did not end when Congress finally decided to investigate more closely the industry it had so cavalierly deregulated at the beginning of the decade. Those in the S&L industry began to cash in political favors (for all those contributions made to political campaigns). Charles Keating's activities

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in this regard are widely known. Less publicized are the sweetheart deals from the latter part of 1988—which redistributed the remaining riches of the S&Ls to America's wealthiest businessmen. Neither political party distinguished itself in the drama. The Bush team consistently downplayed the extent of the debacle during the presidential campaign of 1988 and the Democrats (Wright, DeConcini, Glenn, Cranston) were themselves too close to the stink to complain overmuch.

Nor is the S&L situation simply a mistake with large but finite proportions that can, with sacrifice, be borne (by the victims, by the way, not the perpetrators). Mayer also spends considerable space criticizing the operation created to clean up the mess, the Resolution Trust Corporation, as well as predicting similar convulsions in the commercial banking system. Indeed, government officials betrayed a conspicuous lack of memory (and principle) when they announced plans in 1991 to deregulate the banking sector as a cure for its problems—the same argument that produced the disastrous Garn-St. Germain legislation which opened the floodgates in 1982.

Mayer's elucidation of the financial components of the problem is admirable. His explanations of interest margins, Fannie Maes, and other intricacies of the S&L issue illuminate an otherwise murky subject. Unfortunately, however, Mayer is simply not cynical enough to produce an entirely satisfying account of the S&Ls. He assumes good motives on the part of too many actors in the drama and treats financial laws as essentially sound when not unduly distorted. Thus he can with clear conscience concentrate on financial manipulations instead of the more general political and economic trends associated with the Reagan revolution. What the S&L crisis has shown, however, is the extent to which a politically committed administration can bend the laws of finance and economics to its own purposes. Roosevelt gave us the New Deal. Johnson attempted a Great Society. Reagan has left us only the Great Pyramid Scam, a financial syphilis that unless radically treated will wreak damage in the body economic for many generations to come.

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

THE DISTANCING OF GOD
The Ambiguity of Symbol in History and Theology
Bernard J. Cooke
Fortress, $24.95, 381 pp.

Luke Timothy Johnson

What Bernard Cooke really wants to argue in this book is that the proper starting point for thinking about God is the experience of God in people's lives. As a theological proposition, that has some merit, even if at this stage of the conversation it is scarcely threatening or novel. The most puzzling feature of this book, in fact, is that Cooke labors so long reaching the thesis (and even then does not state it so clearly), and that so much of that labor seems misdirected. It reminds me of a doctor who does weeks of sophisticated testing to diagnose a life-threatening illness, only to offer sugared water as a cure.

Here's the diagnosis: Cooke wants to show how in Christianity the experience of God has been "distanced" by the way in which symbols have developed and been used. His approach is etiological. He begins with what he considers an original state of health: First Jesus' "Abba experience" gave an immediate sense of God's presence in all of life's circumstances, and then the primitive church's experience of the Spirit appropriated that "Abba experience." Cooke suggests that the first Christians' healthy awareness of God-present-in-the-risen-Lord did not require "religion."

Yet, the virus of alienation from God's presence was introduced almost at once—even within the New Testament writings—as Jewish structures of authority and worship moved the community toward institutionalization and "ritual," and as Hellenistic hankering for abstraction led the community toward doctrine.

Cooke traces the sad stages of this chronic sickness through the Patristic, Medieval, Reformation and Renaissance, and Modern periods. Development, in his treatment, is decline. Yes, there were times and places of temporary remission, or even specious health. But the disease of distancing wielded inexorable power and took over the entire organism. Institutionalization placed leaders in the position of mediating salvation. Ritual became formalized and distant. Doctrine became hopelessly complex and opaque.

Much of this is familiar, though Cooke's clinical procedures are distinctive on two counts: He tests for the same three symptoms through an unusually ambitious range of literature, and he extends the discussion through the Reformation and Renaissance into the period when the acids of modernity made it more and more difficult even to find the "body" called Christianity, diseased or well.

Another clinician might detect some flaws in this epidemiological survey. First, its rapidity invites the typical problem: The more the reader knows about the many authors covered, the less willing the assent to Cooke's thumbnail characterizations; the less a reader knows, the more confusing the rapid transition from one period, author, topic to another. Second, the data does not bend so easily to the tests put to it, forcing Cooke to acknowledge as many exceptions as instances. Third, the tests are flawed by the failure to provide clear categories: The word "symbol" is used in so many different ways that I gave up trying to assign it any specific meaning—yet symbolism is what the book purports to be about. Similarly, the author talks about Jesus' "Abba experience," as though it were widely known what this consisted in; uses phrases such as "ordinary experience" as though they had self-evident significance; complains about the use of a philosophy of "participation" without taking the time to explain what he means by it and why we should all agree it is worse than "presence."

This semantic slipperiness and concep-

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tual catch-all-ism is combined with an assumed "political correctness" in the reader. Do we no longer even have to *argue* that notions of transcendence in terms of distance are nonsensical, or that patriarchy in all forms must be eliminated (whatever that means), or that hierarchy is unthinkable in the "movement toward equality and freedom that is at the heart of today's social revolution [that] heralds a new epoch in human history"?

Beyond all these minor irritants, the reader must ask whether any of these tests proves anything about a *disease* at all. It stands to reason that if the sources studied are the sort of "great books of Western Christianity" that form the basis of all such surveys, Cooke's outcome will look the way it does. If we read Athanasius and Augustine for the theological treatises, by golly, they *do* use philosophical abstractions. But did anybody but other bishops ever read those works? What about the things that Augustine and Athanasius said to their *people* about their "ordinary experience"? We have—albeit largely untranslated within the pages of Migne—raftloads of homilies and catechetical instructions and letters available to us, sources that are much more in contact with people's lives. Do they show the same tendencies? We'll never know, if these "histories of ideas" keep reading the same standard sources to the neglect of everything else.

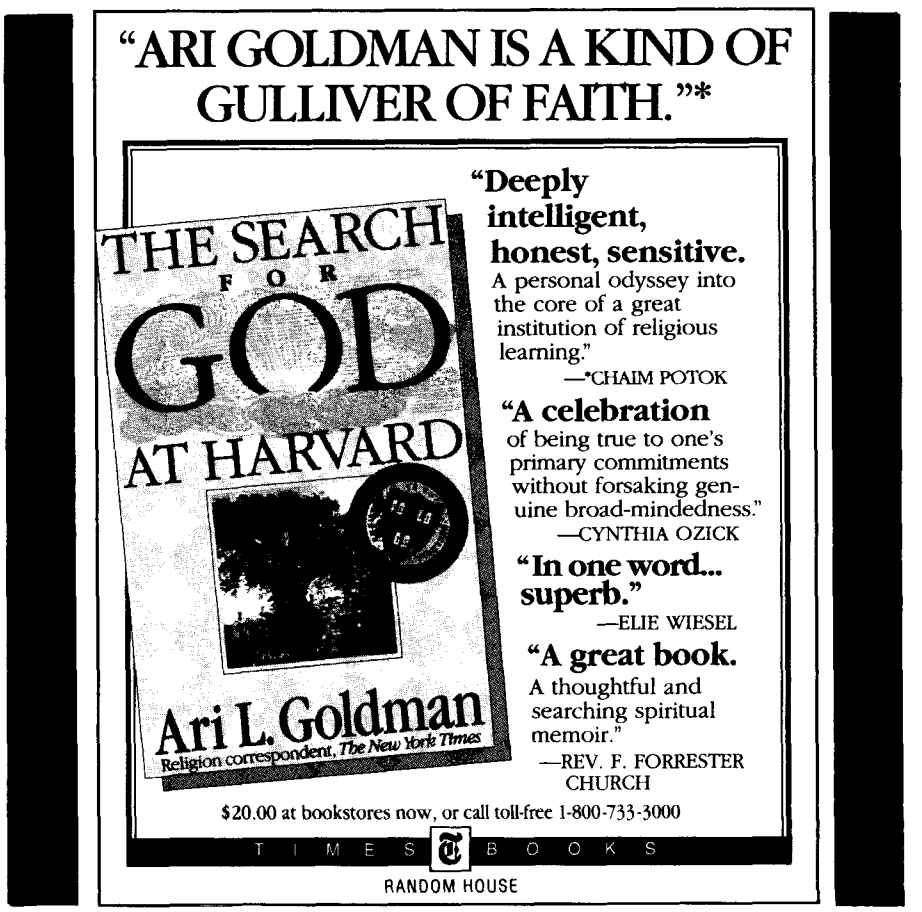
For that matter, Cooke seems to assume that if a particular *symbol* by its internal logic "distances," then the people's experience of God is thereby alienated. He complains, for example, that in the medieval period ritual was something that people saw only as a spectacle. Fair enough. He complains that they were more interested in apparitions, miracles, pilgrimages, relics. Yes. But were not these things *their* "symbols" of God's presence immediately available to them—even though they are not the ones Cooke wants to talk about? And were they not perhaps *their* "rituals," which served exactly the functions ritual always has provided? Likewise in contemporary Christianity, Cooke disapproves of "magical" or "miraculous" ways of conceiving of God's presence, demanding instead a more immanentist understanding, even though that might appear or work in a far more "distancing" way for the "ordinary life" of the mythical ordinary Christian than the "incorrect" symbolism of miracles.

In any case, Cooke's diagnosis declares the body virtually dead because of the disease of symbolic distancing. What is his prescription? The second part of his book reviews the contributions made to the study of symbols by the academic fields of anthropology, psychology, and linguistics/literary criticism. Now the names and summations are truly rapid-fire. Cooke seems to have great optimism about the contributions all these new theories can make for our understanding of symbols, even though he repeatedly acknowledges that (a) the premises of most of these theories are incompatible with any traditional understanding of God and world at all; (b) the theories, not only between, but also within fields are often incompatible with each other.

The truly amazing thing about Cooke's prescription is that he does not seem to recognize its homeopathic character. His supposed remedy is in fact simply an acute form of the chronic disease he has so lingeringly described. What could possibly establish more *distance* from the real experience of God in the world than to adopt these academic *theories* concerning symbolism?

Surely Cooke is academic enough himself to be aware of how the epistemological withdrawal he describes has had the effect in contemporary scholarship of eroding even the bases for conversation between supposed colleagues in the same discipline. Does he not recognize that nothing is less likely to have pertinence to the discernment of the experience of God in "ordinary life" than these theories that (particularly in graduate schools at the present time) depend less and less on contact with living data in their formulation?

In his earlier analysis, Cooke complained about theologians distancing God through their analysis. But at least they analyzed within the context of faith and within a living community of worship. As they wrote doctrinal treatises they also preached homilies, and genuflected, and prayed the psalms. Why do the present theorists speak about religious symbols? To whom are they speaking? Indeed, to whom, really, is Cooke speaking? □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THE SEMINARY OF FICTION

TRAFFIC AND LAUGHTER
Ted Mooney
Knopf, $19.95, 402 pp.

Paul Elie

I like to imagine a world in which novice writers would attend a seminary of sorts. There, superiors like Tom Wolfe and Saul Bellow would encourage them to write complex, prophetic, interdisciplinary novels, which would reclaim the audience that literary fiction has ceded to thrillers and movies. These novices would employ all the styles of postwar writing, drawing on the sprawling works of Pynchon and Garcia Marquez as well as the spare domestic stories thought to have dominated recent American fiction. Adopting as their creed the epigraph from Don DeLillo's *Libra*—"'Happiness [says Lee Harvey Oswald] is taking part in the struggle, where there is no borderline between one's own personal world, and the world in general'"—they would try to bridge the familiar gaps between public life and private life, history and intimacy, innovation and entertainment, a great work and a good read.

Ted Mooney's first novel, *Easy Travel to Other Planets* (1981), suggested that he was such a writer. An extended comic riff on a biologist's romance with a dolphin, told in thick and sophisticated prose, it was a work of freewheeling erudition and energy. Mooney's absence from the literary scene in the decade after its release implied that he had gone off somewhere to write a formidable follow-up to it. Sure enough, *Traffic and Laughter* is just the kind of book that could be expected to earn the highest praise in my seminary of fiction—freewheeling, erudite, energetic, a bold attempt to be all things to all people.

Like *Libra*, whose imaginative reinvention of the Kennedy assassination it emulates, *Traffic and Laughter* has as its main theme the merging of public and private lives in the fiction called history. Set in Los Angeles in a time that feels like the present, it follows a group of characters who rather too clearly embody the public-private motif. Sylvia Walters, elder daughter of a high-ranking U.S. diplomat, is a disk jockey: her voice is "the sound of the city of angels," but her face is unrecognizable to passersby on the street. Her new lover, Michael, creates special effects for movies, re-enacting sea battles from "the Allied invasion of Japan in November of 1945" at his suburban workspace. Nomanzi Lolombela, the daughter of a diplomat for the emerging black Southern African nation Azania, stars in that country's hit TV show, and her half-brother Chentula leads Azania's most popular rock band: public figures in their homeland but unknowns abroad, they are people of mixed identity.

When Nomanzi and Chentula come to Los Angeles in search of movie roles and record deals, the four meet in the first of many coincidences grounded in the novel's attempt to reinvent recent history. The diplomats Paul Walters and Joseph Lolombela are in Europe negotiating a treaty that will ban testing of a brand-new weapon—the atomic bomb, here called "the fission bomb" or "that fission bomb thing." In response to Walters's support of the Azanian cause, a khaki-clad espionage figure has begun to harass Sylvia and Michael, reminding them that the public world of diplomacy is one a diplomat's daughter can never escape.

As the treaty talks falter, Walters's life is threatened, and the group leaves Los Angeles for Paris and South Africa, where Chentula's band plays at a peace-and-justice rally—the younger generation's version of diplomacy. By the time we reach the novel's predictably explosive end, their public and private lives have been neatly wrapped: Sylvia is pregnant (a literary cipher for "intense private experience"), and all of them, joined by a producer with ties to a German diplomat, plan to make a movie.

The novel is not so much a story as it is a series of linked incidents. There is much to admire in Mooney's rendering of these. Depicting Sylvia and Michael's shared moments, he often comes up with images that deftly show history meeting intimacy: "She put the folders on the floor beside the open suitcase, where they slid into disarray. Michael had once seen the geological plates of the adjacent canyon slide apart in exactly this fashion ...." Mooney captures the self-consciousness of people for whom life is a role-playing exercise: "Halfway up the redwood steps, [Michael] caught his breath and stopped, struck unexpectedly by the premonition of a day in which this place, this house, this invented structure whose protection he was manfully miming, would simply cease to be." In the scenes of diplomacy, he reflects gracefully on the nature of politics: glancing at his fellow diplomats, Mooney writes, Walters "was momentarily struck dumb by the beauty of the fiction by which this meeting had been convened: that a man could represent a country, that a country could represent its people." And on occasion he contrives a biting and true comic exchange:

"What is it people say in America, Paul, when they feel their lives are somehow—how should I put it?—lifted out of the ordinary, into something...momentarily grander?"

Walters smiled; he had begun to see where Bloch was headed. "They say, 'It's like a movie.'"

However, Mooney hasn't set out merely to offer insights, artful prose, and comic relief; he has purported to reinvent the world and elicit our interest in it. His efforts in this regard are surprisingly clumsy and halfhearted. Setting the invention of the atomic bomb in the present day seems at first to be an inspired move, one that will lead him—and us—to envision all the ways in which the world order might be different, and thus to see the world with new eyes. One imagines fifty more years of conventional wars, no cold war or deterrence, a militant Japan, a new set of European alliances, an absence of apocalyptic dread, and so on. Rather than developing these possibilities, though, Mooney just nods to his premise now and then, telling us that

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the present time is "one of the few since the Second World War [without] military conflict," that Michael grew up "in a trailer park in Los Alamos, New Mexico," and that the diplomats' briefing books refer to "the power of a thousand suns" (an echo of the phrase from the Bhagavad-Gita with which Robert Oppenheimer described the first atomic bomb detonation). And while one might expect that a world without atomic weapons might differ from the real world in countless smaller ways, Mooney explores this only in a few flights of fancy. When Sylvia thinks of "Joyce's last novel, *A Simple Tail* ... so vivid, erotic, and loving a volume," the reader, rather than feeling a world remade, is reminded of how arbitrary and even lazy Mooney's remaking is. Such laziness extends to simpler matters of verisimilitude. The book's theme demands that its characters traffic in politics and entertainment, the subcultures where private and public lives most obviously intersect. But these subcultures are carelessly presented, undermining the plausibility of the novel as a whole.

Some readers might seek delight instead in Mooney's aggressively odd sense of structure. In the main, the novel moves at a deliberate and unvarying pace, with every conversation fully recorded, every freeway and restaurant copiously described. But this approach frequently yields to mock film-script scenarios, dream sequences, or self-conscious commentary by the narrator.

Dullness is this novel's most vexing quality. A novelist can play fast and loose with language, form, facts, history—as long as doing so increases our interest. Because they aren't all that interesting, Mooney's tricks seem not only poorly done, but irresponsible as well.

So what went wrong? *Easy Travel to Other Planets* derived its charm from the fact that Mooney employed his learning and verbal gifts in the service of sheer whimsy. In *Traffic and Laughter*, having chosen a premise with great moral and formal implications, he has failed to rise to the larger challenge. His plan is grandly conceived, but haphazardly executed.

DR. FREUD OR DR. FRAUD?

READING FREUD
Explorations and Entertainments
Peter Gay
Yale University Press, $24.95, 204 pp.

Eugene Taylor

Why more Freud? After all, Professor Gay has already brought us five different works either about or including the Inventor of Psychoanalysis, and then topped that with his award winning biography *Freud: A Life for Our Time*(1988), which he followed with an anthology of readings. By his own direct statement, and by reading between the lines, the author of this little text gives us three reasons for yet an additional dose of the Psychoanalytic Wizard of Vienna. The first is for the love of fine scholarship as an end in itself. The second is to put a few finishing touches on the study of a life the way lives have been classically studied. The third, inferred more by what is not stated, is the subtle art of rebuttal.

Gay, himself, describes these eight essays as falling within the genre of serious fun. Some are lighthearted, even tongue-in-cheek, others more somberly reflective and conjectural. Justified by an artist's rather than a pedant's sense of order, they include Freud's view on the real identity of Shakespeare, an interpretation of names Freud gave his children, Freud on free will and determinism, Freud's list of "ten good books," Freud's jokes, a fictitious review of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, a spoof on what if the inventor of psychoanalysis had been a German instead of a Jew, and a peek at letters between Freud and Minna Bernays, Freud's sister-in-law and alleged paramour.

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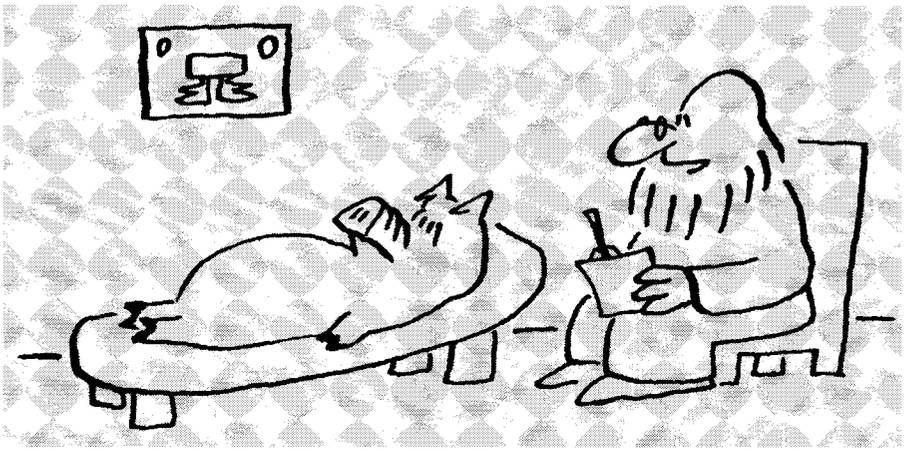
As for scholarship, all but two are specimens in their own way of critical thinking, expert use of the laws of evidence, and a high command of the English language—three dying arts in the present days of advertising double-speak, media hype, and therapeutic psychobabble.

As for the study of a life, we observe that no one does so any more. In the art of biography in times past, Johnson had his Boswell, Henry James his Leon Edel, Freud his Ernest Jones and now his Peter Gay. Rare is the savant today who devotes his entire life to the study of another life. Instead, we have the study of lives, where someone rushes in to do a book on Proust, then runs off to write one on James Joyce, then Edith Wharton. Almost no one thinks it worthy to embark for any long period upon an in-depth study of a single person, largely, we suppose, for economic reasons and the press of time.

Gay, however, has courted his subject for decades, and then given it his concentrated attention for the past fifteen years. This eighth volume, a collection of allegedly minor papers, shows the author's sustained interest in an unsolved question, or a document overlooked, which he presents because he hopes that others will be interested also. And while he has promised us that, henceforth, he intends to leave the person of Freud behind, Gay, convinced that psychoanalytic insights are indispensable to the practicing historian, assures us that Freud's ideas will indeed surface in his future works.



"And just how big is *this 'big, bad wolf'?"*

As for the subtle rebuttal, the reader must rely merely on the present reviewer's conjecture, for the two pieces that are not straightforward scholarship are presented as "wholly frivolous," hardly deserving of even the name "papers," Gay says. Nevertheless, they are included because Gay believes they have become "historical documents, with a life of their own." One, in particular, is Gay's "discovery" of a turn-of-the-century review of Freud's book on dreams, which, since Gay's alleged "translation" was published in 1981, has set the journalistic pot boiling over more than once.

Informed readers must certainly be familiar with this recent Freud flap. In 1981 Gay published his "newly discovered" review of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, done by an anonymous Austrian physician at the turn of the century and published in an obscure medical journal, the *Grazer Medizinische Vierteljahresschrift*. Several Freud scholars, and not a few orthodox psychoanalysts, subsequently acknowledged Gay's discovery in the professional literature.

One of these was the parapetetic and keen-witted Freud historian, Peter Swales. After a time, however, Swales, suspecting that the review might be a complete hoax, set off on an unsuccessful international search for the obscure medical journal. Finally, Swales consulted with the Freud scholar, Frank Sulloway, on the matter. Sulloway was able to cool Swales's ardor for battle long enough to have the psychoanalyst, Rosemarie Sand, write to Gay with a discreet inquiry. Would he confess that the anonymous review was a hoax? Gay said that the piece had been published just for fun in collusion with the editor of *Harper's*, Lewis Lapham, that there was no deliberate deception intended, and that there was nothing to confess.

Believing that outright fraud had been perpetrated, Swales called the *New York Times*, which sent one of its science writers, Daniel Goleman, to investigate. Goleman called Gay, and, according to the Swales group, was not given all the true facts or, according to Gay, simply got parts of the account wrong. In any case Goleman eventually published a piece in the*Times* titled "A Freudian Spoof is Slipped Past Many Freud Scholars." Soon newspapers as far away as England and Yugoslavia were abuzz with the story. Sixteen signatories, including Sophie Freud and Adolph Grunebaum, wrote a letter to *Times* protesting Gay's explanation. Gay thought his interlocutors rude—after all, he had told the truth when questioned—while Gay's harshest critics—annoyed that he had never formally admitted to his insider's joke and infuriated that he would not acknowledge their names in print directly—thought him arrogant.

Here, then, in *Reading Freud: Explorations and Entertainments*, is Gay's long-awaited side of what he called a non-story, told in full, especially for the benefit of all his detractors.

REVIEWERS

JOHN FEFFER *has written on foreign policy issues for several newspapers and magazines. He is the author of* Beyond Detente: Foreign Policy and U.S. Options *(Hill & Wang). His most recent contribution to* Commonweal *was "Up the creek without a compass," May 3, 1991.*

LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON *is professor of New Testament and Christian origins at Indiana University at Bloomington. He is author of* The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation, *and* Decision-Making in the Church: A Biblical Model *(both Fortress).*

PAUL ELIE *has just been graduated from the Graduate Writing Division at Columbia University. His most recent contribution to* Commonweal *was "Dropping In on the Shakers," May 3, 1991.*

EUGENE TAYLOR *is the author of* William James on Exceptional Mental States *(Scribner's).*

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Recent new evidence has come to my attention, however, showing that Professor Gay, in fact, has not perpetrated a fraud on the Freud-fold. Tucked away in the uncatalogued section of the William James Papers at Harvard is a letter from James to his personal physician and neurologist-turned-psychoanalyst, James Jackson Putnam, which shows that William James was the author of the anonymous review that appeared in the *Grazer Medizinische Vierteljahresschrift*, and that the editor, a Dr. Oberhuber, was a friend of Putnam's from their days at Leipzig under Meynert and Benedict, who had also been Freud's teachers. James, traveling across Europe at the time in search of a cure for his neurasthenia, had slipped into Vienna on a secret visit to receive psychoanalytic treatment from Freud and managed to pass the review to the editor on leaving. The letter concludes with a thank-you to Putnam for the introduction to Oberhuber. James described him as "a perfectly decent Prussian type who had recently abandoned neurology for a form of homeopathic-spiritualism, which he thought superior in all forms to the insensitivities of reductionistic laboratory types recently invading medicine. Such men, he believed, following Freud's theory, were only in love with their measurements and their instruments." In a thinly veiled slight to all objectors, the letter ends with a quote from Friedrich Schiller, *"Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens"* ("Against stupidity even the gods fight in vain"; or a more liberal translation might be: "There will always be some people who just won't get it").

Thus has Professor Gay been rescued from being typecast as the Art Buchwald of the psychoanalytic world.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 354)

Israel, as though "glib clerical celibates" are appealing to this kind of precedent to justify temporary toleration of plural marriages. (What of those feminists and other women of our own times who, even for the sake of convenience, allow their own fetuses to be dismembered?)

Polygamy is not the gospel ideal. And yet, monogamy does not guarantee a woman's integrity. In America now, almost half of monogamous marriages end in divorce, with most of the resulting burdens imposed on women and children. Integrity can be found in other kinds of marriages honored by generations of culture. In Africa I found most women in polygamous marriages living with dignity, integrity, and fidelity, in great harmony with the other wives and having a profound and compassionate love for their children.

GEORGE CROCENZI, C.S. SP

Black self-help

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: If, as your editorial ["Beyond Racial Politics," April 5] puts it, poverty, crime, and violence deprive millions of American blacks of "what is necessary for human dignity," such dignity will not be restored through more government good will.

Both Shelby Steele and others have a clear grasp of the problem. The critical missing ingredient in the black community is the input of the middle-class haves, whose energies seem confined to initiating policies primarily designed to wrest from the system more entitlements for themselves. While they snivel about a "glass ceiling" in the corporate world that black executives apparently cannot transcend, they do nothing about using their well-documented financial resources for the creation of small industry and other businesses, which would generate jobs and still more enterprises within the black community.

The call for this kind of responsibility from blacks and the prospect that such a demand is in the realm of possibility is a shocking notion to most whites, because they are unaware of the billions (yes, billions) of dollars earned annually (and legally) by American blacks. Successful businessmen like Joshua Smith and Paul Pryde have spent years exhorting middle-class blacks to put their money where their talk is.

The last thing the poor need is another patronizing program such as the one suggested by Professor Roy Brooks, where

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"Withheld any interesting statistics lately?"

the poor would be "tutored" in the fundamentals of social responsibility by, of all people, the black middle class. It is this very group that could more appropriately benefit from such tutoring.

ELIZABETH WRIGHT

The writer is editor of Issues & Views, *a quarterly newsletter concerned with issues affecting the black community.*

Condom not safe

Spokane, Wash.

To the Editors: In his article "Condoms, AIDS, and Catholic Ethics" [March 22], James F. Drane draws a comparison between controversy over the pill and controversy over the condom. It is noteworthy that development of the anovulant pill gave rise to so many strong feelings precisely because it was the first method that seemed to be highly effective and to have no unhealthy side-effects. That is, the inadequacy of the condom contributed to enthusiasm for the pill. Since the condom is less than 100 percent effective as a birth control method, would it not follow that the device is not 100 percent protection against transmission of disease? A hemophiliac's or medical technician's "window of vulnerability" to infection is cited by Drane as justification for use of the condom; but condom use presents a "window" of its own, which ought not be overlooked.

In the name of protecting life, Drane asks the church to endorse a device which can in practice fail to protect it. Suffering from a "strep" infection, one would not subject his or her spouse to possible infection through close contact; abstention for the sake of the beloved would be the obvious choice. All the more, then, would one make the loving decision to abstain from sexual contact if death were a potential result. An important consideration in a couple's decision making is the strength of the partners' desire for one another; at least as important is the care which the partners can and should have for each other's welfare. There is cause for suspicion about any line of reasoning that assumes that the urge to have intercourse is irresistible, that intercourse is a necessary means of getting through times of personal stress. Professor Drane argues for temporary use of the condom by resorting to the argument for the "lesser evil"; but pointing to the lethal potential inherent in any sexual act performed by a carrier of the HIV virus, I would propose that temporary abstention from intimate contact is by far the lesser evil.

RICHARD LA BELLE

The author replies:

Mr. La Belle is correct; the condom does not provide 100 percent protection against disease transmission. And certainly to ask the church to endorse condoms is absurd. I would be satisfied to have the church back away just a bit from its absolute condemnation of condoms—a condemnation which, as my article explained, is not related to the degree of its effectiveness as a disease preventive.

I agree with Mr. La Belle again that "one would not subject his or her spouse to possible strep infection through close contact." The common-sense response to a strep infection is to use barriers against transmitting the infection. A doctor who suspects he may have such an infection does not abstain from contact with patients who need his or her attention; rather, the doctor wears a barrier-mask. A child with a strep infection is not isolated from family contact but educated to take basic hygienic precautions, including the use of barrier techniques when coughing. The husband with an infection does not retreat to a cabin in the woods but takes similar precautions.

Granted, the "safer" way is not 100 percent safe, but what in this life is 100 percent safe? In this case, Mr. La Belle would say, the answer is abstinence. But abstinence suffers from the worst of all ethical defects as a public policy to contain a growing epidemic: it doesn't work. The effort and expense of promoting it would not pay off. To be ethical, public policy must be effective. Condoms aren't perfect. Sometimes they only make an immoral act less harmful. But they can effectively reduce HIV transmission (and many other sources of disease). If the condom is highly effective and not an absolute evil, why should the church itself become a barrier to its use as the only feasible way of preventing or lessening a deadly epidemic?

JAMES F. DRANE

Bush's sole concern

Denver, Colo.

To the Editors: The "War at Home" issue [April 19] gave much-needed coverage of the domestic crisis. I urge you to continue coverage of poverty and related issues.

While I agree with the overall point of your lead editorial ["A Risk in Time"], I think you are significantly wrong in suggesting that "the nation's leaders have chosen not to choose," and in saying that "an exception must be made for the Gulf War." The Bush crowd's decisiveness on the war and its deliberate (calculated, determined, *decisive*) domestic policies favoring the wealthy are of a piece. You are, I submit, blinded by your own troubled wrestling with the just cause issue on the Gulf War. The war may have had possible just causes and real just effects (liberating oppressed peoples, protecting threatened peoples), but the real cause and intention of the war—what really led to Bush's decisiveness—was the same as the real cause of the administration's decisive neglect of most domestic needs. In both cases the real interests of the wealthy were and are at stake. In both cases these interests have demanded and received decisive action.

We must, of course, be politic in our advocacy, not just radical in our denunciations. Yet I also think we need to be clear about the problem. What we are up against is not benign neglect or any failure to choose, but the clear and calculated choices of a powerful class at war with the interests of what Michael Harrington called "The vast majority."

If, as your editorial concludes, we need "politicians willing to risk," we also need editors "willing to risk" by naming this basic truth about our country—a truth, by

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the way, which the current pope has not been hesitant to name. JOHN F. KANE

The writer is chair of the religious studies department at Regis College.

Bush's phony outrage

Sacramento, Calif.

To the Editors: Your editorials and other comments on the "just-war" question in the issue of April 5 were somewhat amazing. I would have expected more skepticism on the part of your editor-in-chief, particularly in view of the invasion of Panama, our sales of strategic materials to Iraq (which continued up to the day of the invasion of Kuwait), and the British role in creating borders in the region without concern for the desires of its people.

George Bush's outrage over the invasion was phony from the start; it had to have other sources than concern for sovereignty. Reporting by Pacific News Service and the *Wall Street Journal* reveals the influence over U.S. economic and political affairs conferred on the ruling families of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia by the "petrodollars" they control—a power that helps to explain why Mr. Bush is very selective about whose borders U.S. troops will defend.

If your editor brought these realities to a parish meeting, along with the plight of the refugees, some changes of opinion might be expected. Rather than erasing the sting of our defeat in Vietnam, the Gulf War can have equally undesirable and lasting effects. Wars never have the results expected by the participants.

PATRICIA LEIPER

The author replies:

I was amazed myself to feel the weight of my thinking falling toward support, first, of sending troops to Saudi Arabia, and then of the sanctions against Iraq, and after January 15, of war with Iraq. Vietnam, our quasi-wars in Central America, and our invasions of Grenada and Panama have made many Americans skeptical, and deeply so, about our government's actions and the claims made to justify them. Nor have I ever found reason to trust the political outlook and instincts of George Bush. But I am also deeply skeptical about the Pacific News Service, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and the myriad other newspaper, magazines, journals, TV news programs I see. Above all I question the highly selective use of snippets from these sources by major advocacy groups of the left and (in the case of the Gulf War) the right. No knowledgeable commentator on the Persian Gulf thinks that oil and money had nothing to do with our involvement there. Plenty of them do not agree with Ms. Leiper's suggestion that George Bush is the puppet of the Arab oil tycoons.

I entirely agree with Ms. Leiper's last sentence, but if it is meant to imply that therefore wars should never be fought, that is a *non sequitur*. I find it a great disappointment that so many who opposed the war, instead of addressing the concerns of those who concluded, however reluctantly, that Saddam Hussein had to be resisted and sent packing from Kuwait, prefer instead to impugn their intelligence and to draw up a general (and again selective) indictment of American foreign policy and leadership as though that settled the question at hand.

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

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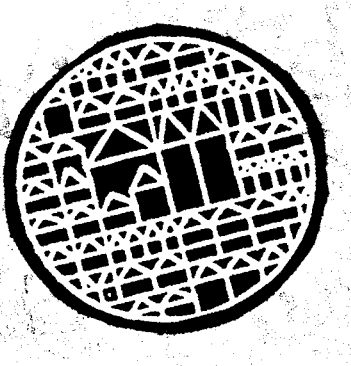

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